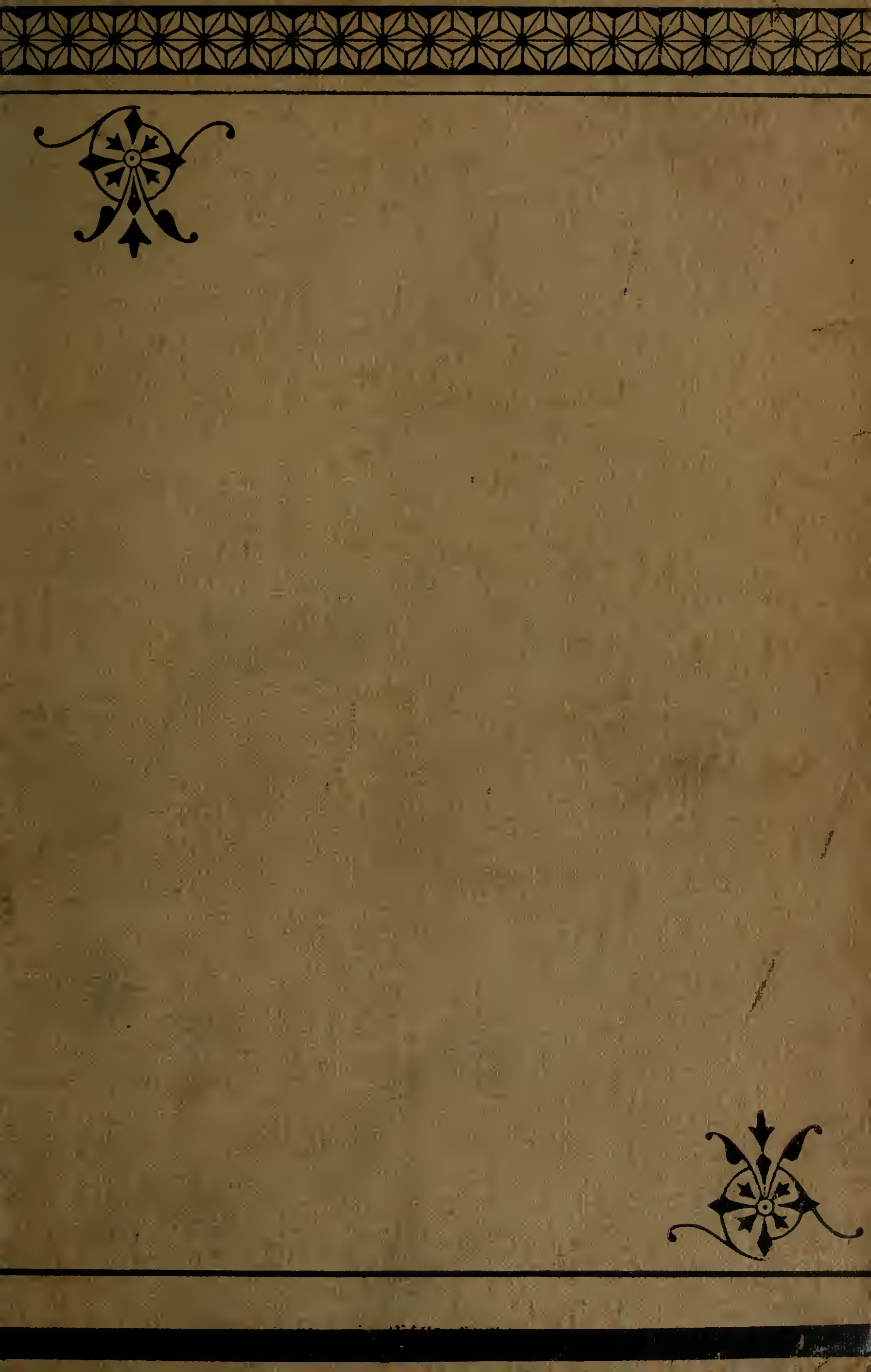

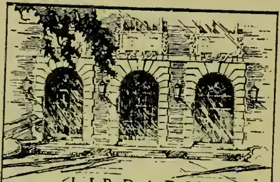

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MY DUCATS AND MY DAUGHTER

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MY DUCATS AND MY DAUGHTER

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. II.

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1884

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MY DUCATS AND MY DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER XII.

COMPROMISE.

"Have you seen to-day's *Forum?*"—Mr. Arden asked his daughter, on the day on which Lynn was to meet the great Mallory at Hartington Gardens.

"I never read it, you know," said Miss Arden. "Has anything happened?"

"Something very disagreeable has happened."

"Something about shares?"

"No—something about poetry. There is a notice in that paper of Dulcimer's book—the 'Roses,' or whatever he calls the stuff."

"Which does not do justice to Mr. Dulcimer's genius?"

"It is merciless, atrocious, really too bad. And, of course, Dulcimer's friends will have shown it him, without fail. It is very pleasant for me, seeing that he and Mallory are both to dine here to-night."

"Mr. Dulcimer will hardly suspect you of having written it, will he?"

"I wish you would cultivate a little sympathy with others, Camilla. Dulcimer asked me to speak about his 'Roses' to Mallory, to make sure that it would be noticed. Naturally, I forgot all about it. It *has* been noticed, with a vengeance. That would, of course, have been a matter of perfect indifference to me, if both men had not been coming here to-night."

"Perhaps they won't."

"Oh, yes, they will. In such cases they always do."

"What made you ask Mr. Dulcimer at all? There are enough without him."

"The force of habit, my dear. Did not you yourself say that I was never to ask Mallory to dine here without asking Dulcimer as well? But I forgot—the presence of two suitors at one time will be a little embarrassing, no doubt."

"You have no right to speak in that way."

"Of course I haven't. But that reminds me of the very thing I meant to say to you. About that young fellow—I wish you would either put that affair upon a proper footing, or else allow me to do it for you."

"You put that 'affair' on a proper footing before, did you not?"

"I saved you from apparent misery, if that is what you mean."

"And now I require to be saved again, you think?"

"I wish you would give up that habit of constantly carping about what happened at Leipsic. I say that in acting as I did there I saved you from what promised to be lifelong wretchedness. And in justice to your good-sense, my dear girl, I must say you were not unwilling to be saved."

"What do you wish me to do now?"

"Why not tell him the whole story and have done with it? It is quite simple. When he was penniless, you gave him up in obedience to your father's wishes. Now, circumstances are altered. I have withdrawn my objection—you can begin being happy ever after—and really, it seems to me, the sooner you begin the better. Put all the blame on me—I don't mind. If Lynn cares for you—and if ever I saw a man in love, *he* is—he can't think less of you for being a dutiful daughter."

"Do you know, I don't think you quite understand Arthur Lynn?"

"I know I don't understand you. Your conduct is so inconsistent. First of all, you were ready to pull me in pieces to get down to the Inglebys. I agreed, though I must say I thought your going there, under the circumstances, rather—ah—strong. However, you went. You saw the young fellow, and I suppose you found he was still in love with you, and so on. Very well. Then you got me to bring him up here—and to go to Mallory about him—a kind of thing I detest doing—and now, after all I have done, you won't put the affair on a proper business-like footing. I don't understand you, Camilla—I don't, indeed!"

"Do you not think, now, that after the 'business-like footing' we put the 'affair' on at Leipsic, it would look rather 'strong' to tell Arthur Lynn the whole story? We should have to point out to him, you know, that though of course we could have nothing to say to him while he was poor, still, now that he is rich, we are ready to forgive him for not having been so before. Might not that look just a trifle mercenary? You see, he does not understand business. He might not see the compliment we were paying him. Some people are so obtuse, you know."

"I wonder you can raise such flimsy objections. That young fellow is one of the easiest people to lead I ever saw. He seems absolutely without back-bone. There is no reason that I know of why you should not marry him to-morrow. You need have no anxiety—the money is there."

"The money *is* the thing that makes me anxious, I admit."

"It need not, my dear girl—it need not, I assure you. Hume made at least £80,000 out there—by thieving, of course. Nobody makes £80,000 out there except by thieving.—However, we've nothing to do with the way the money was made."

"Oh, no. All we have to consider is how it is invested."

"Oh, the investments are all sound enough. Hume consulted me about the most of them. Now, Camilla, look here. My own instinctive notion is this, that either you or I should tell Lynn what we know. But since you won't have that, here is my suggestion. Next time I'm down in that infernal borough, I'll drop a quiet hint to his old bore of an uncle, and then— "

"Whatever you do, you must not do that!" —said Camilla, with an energy that almost startled Mr. Arden.

"Camilla," he said, "I think you are going mad. You seem bent on bringing misery on yourself, and on this young fellow, and—and on me. It is too bad. He is a simple, kindly lad, whom you could twine round your little finger. The poor fellow is over head and ears in love with you—anyone can see *that*—and you should really consider his feelings."

"Oh, dear! I thought we had agreed *not* to consider them?"

"Don't be affected, my dear. This is too serious a matter for affectation."

"It is. But at what income do people begin to have feelings?"

"What's the good of that kind of talk?—The long and the short of it is this—I want to know when this shilly-shallying and carping and nonsense are to come to an end. Depend upon it, my dear, the plain, straightforward way is the best."

"I am glad, I'm sure, that you have found it so."

"Camilla, you are acquiring an ironical style of speaking to your father which I don't like. I don't care much about these things—I am not like a number of men—but I don't think it is quite becoming. You have been intolerably fretful since you came back from these people. And I suppose you do care for Lynn as much as ever, though your way of showing it is certainly peculiar. The end of it all will be that old Ingleby will get his nephew into his hands again. I have no doubt the young man's cousins will manage to console him. What kind of girl, now, is that elder daughter of Ingleby's ?"

"I believe Gertrude Ingleby is a good girl."

"Is that your way of calling her plain ?"

"No, you know quite well that she is not plain."

"I don't want to know how good she is. She may be as good as she thinks necessary. I have no objection to that. Is she attractive ? Is she the kind of girl likely to fascinate a romantic youth ?"

"I suppose romantic youths are easily fascinated."

"They are—and easily offended. There is a capriciousness about your treatment of that young fellow which it is very painful for me to witness—I don't in the least see what there is to laugh at in that. From what your aunt tells me, I infer that you have been flirting again with Dulcimer, while that young fellow was looking on. And yet you say he is clever—"

"Who? Mr. Dulcimer?"

"No, not Mr. Dulcimer. I have warned you before about Dulcimer, Camilla. He is not a marrying man. He is by no means such a fool as he looks. I should be sorry—I mean, of course, I should be glad, if all my clients had a tithe of his shrewdness. Well, as to Lynn—he may be clever or not; I don't mind. So far as that goes, he may have genius; he can afford it. The point I look to is, that he suits you, and has money."

"And a rich son-in-law—not so shrewd as Mr. Dulcimer—might be convenient to you at this moment?"

"Certainly," answered Mr. Arden with placid candour; "just now, if I had a son-in-law with eighty thou', who was tractable, and could be got to see his own interests—why, it would be a good thing for him, and—I don't deny it—for me. And that is a thing I think you really ought to consider."

"Is not that rather a coarse way of looking at the 'affair?'"

"My dear, after your very sensible behaviour abroad, and your very remarkable journey to Sprayton, I think your dislike of plain-speaking is a trifle—strained. I can assure you, when Lynn seeks an interview with me I shall offer no objections to the match. You would not have to play long at poverty."

"He is not very likely to go to you after what has passed. You see, you convinced him so clearly before of his wickedness in being poor. But, of course, you could refuse nothing to the son of your benefactor—the man who founded your fortune and first led you into politics—"

"So the young fellow has been telling you about our meeting down there. I see you think the ironical style suits you. It is an effective style in high comedy, no doubt, but that kind of thing is best behind the footlights. If there were anyone else here to admire it, I should not mind; but between our two selves, my dear, it is rather ridiculous. I don't say it's unfilial, and all that. But I do say it is ridiculous. It wastes time. You had much better say plainly what you mean and what you want."

"Very well, I shall try to answer plainly," said the girl, speaking with a quiet ferocity that astonished Mr. Arden. "What I want is to escape from the humiliation you are bringing on me."

"Oh, come!"—interjected Mr. Arden.

"You interfered once before between Arthur Lynn and me, and I was weak enough to treat him as badly as you wished. Then you allowed me—you encouraged me—to go down to Sprayton, to decoy him up here that you might make money out of him. —Oh, yes—that is the truth! I did not see it then—if I had, do you think I should have gone? You have used such words to him that he can never ask me to—to marry him, until he knows of his fortune. And when he does know of it, he will discover how he has been deceived. I realise it all now as I did not before. I thought only of meeting him again. Don't you see now what is the end of all your scheming?"

"This is madness—sheer midsummer madness," said Mr. Arden. "It seems to me, Camilla, that you are making a Sphinx of this youth quite unnecessarily. Just look, now, at the plain facts. Old Ingleby, of course, knows all about it—he is one of the trustees under Hume's will. And it was he who got Hume to tie up the money in this absurd way—keeping the young man in ignorance of his fortune, until it suited him to tell. I said that was nonsense at the time, when Hume told me about it; but Ingleby, it seems, thought his nephew would make ducks and drakes of the money, and play his father's game over again. I'm sure I could advise him better than that!"

"I'm sure you could!"

"Yes. Well, what puzzles me is, why the

deuce Ingleby hasn't told him before this time? I know it was left to him entirely—whenever he speaks the word, Lynn steps into his fortune. I can't make out why he hasn't told. But it is most unfair to the young man. Fancy sending the poor lad to be tutor to that man in Shawkirk!—a fellow with £80,000! But he is a deep card, is Ingleby—as cunning as a fox, in spite of all his Covenanting humbug. You may depend upon it, he has a game to play—and you are helping him to play it, my dear, let me tell you. I should not be at all surprised if the daughter had something to do with it. But I don't intend to let him have it all his own way."

"Remember this," Camilla broke in, speaking very fast, "if I find you in any way trying to—to make money out of Arthur Lynn, I shall at once—"

"My dear girl, there's no need for your going into heroics. I was merely reminding you that I've had a deal of trouble in this matter, first and last, and that it would be rather hard on me if it all went for nothing. In the meantime, I have no objection to doing as you wish—though my instinct tells me you are wrong. Let us agree to say nothing at all about it, for the present. Have him here as much as you like, and limit your flirtations—at least, when he is looking on. After all, his uncle must let it out, sooner or later; and they can't keep a cent from the lad—that is satisfactory, so far."

The result of this interview—which was by no means the first of its kind—proved agreeable neither to Miss Arden nor to her amiable parent. Camilla's feelings were embittered, and her anxiety was sharpened. When her father assumed that she cared only for Arthur Lynn's money, he had, as she knew, only too good warrant for his cynical inferences. At Leipsic, she had agreed to break with Lynn partly because of her father's urgency, partly because she herself could see no way of combining happiness and poverty. Then she had discovered, as she thought, that the happiness of her life was really bound up with the man she had renounced. Her lover himself, and not his riches, had been the magnet that drew her to Sprayton. She had even intended to tell him all she knew, whenever an opportunity presented itself. But she had found it very difficult to frame such a confession; her courage had failed her; and she had allowed the golden moments to slip away unused. Now, she could only hope that the man who had her heart in keeping might never discover that at one time her knowledge of his fortunes had exceeded his own.

Had Mr. Ingleby divulged the secret—as Mr. Arden and his daughter had expected he would have done ere now—all might have gone well. But Mr. Ingleby persisted in keeping silent, for reasons which perplexed Camilla herself much less than they did her father. There was one way, indeed, of making Mr. Ingleby speak—that favoured by Mr. Arden—the dropping of a casual hint that others besides himself were acquainted with the story of Hume's legacy. But this course would defeat its own purpose; since Mr. Ingleby, while informing his nephew of the change in his fortunes, would be careful to explain to him what must have been the motives of Miss Arden's visit to Sprayton, and of her father's excessive complaisance at Shawkirk. Would Lynn's regard for her survive the disclosure of her insincerity? If he saw in her a heartless fortune-hunter, could she blame him, however different she might know the reality to be?

The truth was, there were two sides to Camilla Arden's nature—one, passionate and impulsive; the other, shrewd and pleasure-loving. Now the obverse and now the reverse came uppermost; so that there were times when she might do something romantically rash, and times when she might show herself coldly calculating. Mr. Arden quite understood this dualism in his daughter's character, and played on either string as it suited him. When it came to breaking off an imprudent love-affair, like that into which she had been drawn at Leipsic, he had appealed, and successfully, to her almost physical shrinking from poverty and its concomitants. When it suited him that the broken threads of her attachment to Arthur Lynn should be knotted together again, he had taken advantage of what he considered her sentimental weakness, and had encouraged her to visit the Inglebys at Sprayton.

Mr. Arden was only half-satisfied with the result of his manœuvring. Lynn, rich and pliant, would be the ideal son-in-law for whom he had long been seeking; and now, when the whole matter—so far as he could see—might be arranged in five minutes' conversation, Camilla would neither move herself, nor allow him to do so. Mr. Arden admired his daughter, for her beauty; respected her, for her cleverness; perhaps feared her a little, for her high spirit and temper. He was firmly resolved that Camilla should not 'throw herself away'—that is, should not bestow her hand in a marriage otherwise than convenient to himself. But he knew that if he drove her into a corner, she was capable of doing something fearfully inconsiderate—ending the game by upsetting the board. Like a skilful tactician, he had accordingly shifted his ground. Since Camilla was so obstinately opposed to an immediate explanation, he would consent, in the meantime, to leave things as they were—that is, to leave things as they were, so far as she was concerned. For Mr. Arden—looking at 'the affair' from the purely commercial standpoint—was quite determined that the trouble he had taken in the matter should not go without its reward. He had, indeed, a little plan of his own, based on two pieces of knowledge he had acquired—his knowledge of Lynn's fortune, and his knowledge of Lynn's character. Mr. Arden, musing on his little plan, experienced the mellow satisfaction of one who has hit upon a 'sure thing.'

CHAPTER XIII.

A PLEASANT PARTY.

No one at Mr. Arden's table that evening felt altogether comfortable—except, indeed, the Anglo-Indian millionaire and the Editor of the *Forum*, who sat down in the peace of a good conscience to the enjoyment of an excellent dinner. The others were sensible, more or less, of a certain restraint in the conversation. Mr. Arden looked forward with dread to an allusion to *The Roses of Sybaris*. Mrs. Chevenix felt ill at ease in Mr. Mallory's presence, as she always did. Dulcimer, still writhing under the satire of the review, cast occasionally a menacing glance in the direction of the unconscious Editor. Camilla's pleasure in her lover's society was marred by the recollection of her father's words—especially by his reference to her ‘flirtation’ with Dulcimer, now seated *vis-à-vis* to Arthur Lynn. As for Lynn, he felt abashed in the presence of Mr. Mallory. His introduction to this great man —to which he had been looking forward so long—had passed off in quite a commonplace manner. “How do you do, Mr. Lynn?”—the Editor had said—“pleased to make your acquaintance; when did you come to town?” Lynn was conscious of a pair of keen eyes fixed upon him—so keen, they seemed to pierce him through and through. He thought he had never seen a face of power before, until seeing that clean-cut, clean-shaven face of Mr. Mallory's. The words were nothing; but the voice!—liquid, silvery, sonorous; a voice of command! Lynn could not overcome a feeling of awe for the first celebrity he had ever met—the man whose works he had studied and admired. In such a presence, he felt, it would not do to talk trivialities; and as nothing of a brilliant or weighty character occurred to him to say, he did not contribute much to the conversation. Mr. Arden, who liked a lively party with plenty of talk, began to despair of his present guests, and told himself that it was "going to be an infernal grind."

But Mr. Mallory came presently to the rescue, having reached that point in the *menu* at which he began to feel that he had dined. Opposite him was seated Mr. Ericson, the Anglo-Indian millionaire. Mr. Mallory always enjoyed the society of Anglo-Indians. He liked to probe and to exhibit their ignorance of India, and to crush them by his superior knowledge. This he generally did by assuming them to be, as a matter of course, intimately acquainted with knotty financial and social problems connected with their land of exile.

Mr. Ericson was an elderly gentleman who had lived all his life at the court of an Indian Rajah, and had made an immense fortune out of timber contracts. He had white hair and a white moustache, which heightened by contrast the extreme swarthiness of his complexion—a half-caste lady had been Mr.

Ericson's mother. He had lately come to London on business, and was one of Mr. Arden's most esteemed clients.

Mr. Mallory set himself to 'draw' the Anglo-Indian, feigning a desire for information which Mr. Ericson was pleased to gratify. This, however, was only preliminary. Mr. Ericson having finished his third tiger-story, the Editor leant back in his chair, assumed his 'tribune' manner, and began, in a tone which at once made everybody listen.

"There are few questions," he observed, "on which I feel more strongly than I do on this of India. To me, Mr. Ericson, the name of Plassey is a name of shame. I bracket the name of Hastings with the name of the dead tyrant of France, and I regard the failure of Clive's essay in suicide as one of the worst evils that ever befel Humanity."

"What!"—exclaimed the astounded Ericson; "Hastings!—Clive! Why, they founded our Indian Empire!"

"Precisely," said Mr. Mallory, with biting emphasis. "Yes, Mr. Ericson, but a day of reckoning will come for England's treatment of the Zulu and the Hindu—the wretched African and the wretched Asiatic—the black man and the brown man. I am convinced of that sombre truth, and this is a subject on which I have thought deeply."

"I think I read something like that in some newspaper or other, at my club to-day," remarked Mr. Ericson.

Camilla shot a glance down the table to Lynn, who could not help smiling.

"Very likely," said Mr. Mallory with unruffled composure; "I am pleased to think that these enlightened opinions spread apace. If France, Mr. Ericson, is haunted by a Red Spectre, England is haunted by a Black Spectre. That Spectre is India—that swarthy incubus"—here Mr. Ericson started, and muttered something in Hindustanee—"which is looming up, big with the ruin of Britain—for it *is* a swarthy incubus, however we may try to hide it by the glittering dust of rhetoric, or deck it with the baubles of Imperialist servility. I have no doubt, Mr.

Ericson, that you, as a resident in that land of misfortune, must have been pained by the spectacle of these wretched Hindus living in a state of chronic starvation—crying aloud for a handful of rice? Have you ever thought how their lot is to be bettered?"

"I have shot a good many man-eating tigers in my time, sir," said the old gentleman; "that did a little good, you know. I am no politician; but the simple fact, I take it, is that there are too many people. That's all I know about it."

"I should preserve the tiger, promote infanticide, and revive *suttee*," said Mr. Arden, languidly.

"The suggestion is pious, but immature," said the Editor. "The fact is, were it not that I cannot trench at present on religious topics"—here Mr. Mallory bowed slightly towards the head of the table, where Mrs. Chevenix sate bolt upright, a figure of incarnate Rebuke—"I could show, I believe, how it is only through the spread of Positivism that India can cease to be a deadening excrescence to England, and England can cease to be a curse to India."

"Positivism?"—said the now thoroughly mystified Ericson; "excuse me, but I don't quite understand?"

"Positivism, sir, some of us believe, will be the future religion of our planet. I cannot explain it at present—but take this one fact. In the Calendar which our Master, Auguste Comte, drew up for those of the Religion, you will find that one of the months is named after Moses. Now, the weeks in the month Moses are associated with the names of Numa, Buddha, Confucius and Mahomet. Again, the days in that month are sacred to Fo-hi and Abraham, to Solomon and Semiramis, to Zoroaster and Isaiah, to Samuel and Hercules, to Ossian, Orpheus, John the Baptist, and others whom I need not name."

"But I can't see what all that has to do with India," said Mr. Ericson.

"I shall show you," said Mr. Mallory. "We gather together in our Calendar and in our Creed the names of the far-shining men of every land. These, and these alone, we venerate. Our religion, therefore, appeals to all men—red and white, black and brown. We do not repel them by the obtrusion of an alien cult—we bind them to us by the bonds of an eclectic hagiology. We would build up the federation of the world on the basis of a purely human religion. We honour the great kings and prophets, the great statesmen and patriots, of the East and West—the Decii and the Benedicts, the Luthers and the Metelli, the Gregorys and the Dantons, the Theocrats of Japan and the Theocrats of Thibet. We can venerate all faiths—we see good even in the dancing dervish and the weeping Wesleyan—we embrace them all in a glorious synthesis—and thus we, and only we, can claim for our Religion that grandest of all names, the name of Catholic !"

The effect of this speech was to convince Mrs. Chevenix that Mr. Mallory had become a Jesuit as well as an Infidel. She had always esteemed him a dangerous man, but she was horror-stricken to find that he had achieved this composite perfection of iniquity. Rising from her place as Mr. Mallory perorated, she gave the signal to Miss Arden, and retreated from the room. Lynn noticed with amusement how she gathered her crapes about her in passing the Editor, as though his touch would be contamination.

Mr. Arden showed but faint interest in Positivism as a topic for table-talk; but neither did he show any surprise at Mr. Mallory's outburst, having, indeed, heard much the same thing from him before. It left Lynn and Ericson equally bewildered. But on Mr. Dulcimer the Editor's harangue had an exhilarating effect. It seemed to him that Mr. Mallory had been making a fool of himself; a man must be crazy, he thought, to talk like that. He was burning with rage against the instigator, if not the perpetrator, of the fell onslaught on *The Roses of Sybaris.* He no longer dreaded entering the lists against his persecutor. So he drank off a glass of wine, passed the decanters, and roused him for the fray.

"I hear, Mr. Lynn," he began, "that you have embraced journalism as a profession?"

Lynn answered that he should, if journalism would embrace him.

"Oh!—surely there can be no doubt as to that," said Mr. Dulcimer; "surely not! I have been told," he continued, "that the first task entrusted to those who aspire to contribute to the—ah—penny press, is the reviewing of books. Now it has always seemed to me a whimsical thing that a man—or youth—should be assumed to be capable of 'criticising,' as it is called, the works of the greatest writers —of 'crowned historians and poets above crowning'—to borrow that marmoreal phrase of Landor's—"

"That *what?*"—asked Mr. Mallory.

"Marmoreal," the poet repeated blandly. "It has, as I was saying, always seemed inexplicable to me that they should be deemed capable of discussing the greatest works of the day, before they are held fit to discuss commonplace characters and everyday incidents."

"The system you object to," said Mr. Mallory, "is in reality sound enough. The leader-writers of a paper have to reflect the opinions of their readers. Before they can do that, they must have studied what these opinions are. But the readers have, of course, no opinions about books; and so it does not signify in the least what the paper says about them. The readers don't know, and don't want to know, whether the reviews are just or unjust."

This confession was soothing to Mr. Dulcimer. He observed that he was surprised at such candour on the part of an editor.

"I am not speaking, of course, of my own paper"—Mr Mallory hastened to explain. "That is conducted on very different principles. I am speaking of the vast majority of papers—such as, for example, that sorry rag, the ——. Most papers, you know, reflect and distort, instead of forming and guiding, public opinion. What I do with the books which come to me for notice—"

"Yes?"—interjected Mr. Dulcimer.

"Is this," the Editor went on. "I first glance through them, and form an estimate of their excellence, or inanity. Such as can only be judged by specialists, I assign to specialists. Such as are imbecile, and call for—ah—piquant treatment"—here Mr. Dulcimer's face paled—"I assign to competent members of my staff. And in all cases I endeavour to correct any undue acerbity, or leniency, in the notices."

Here Mr. Arden made an attempt to turn the conversation to certain casks of wine which he was sending on a voyage round the Cape. But Mr. Dulcimer was not to be diverted from his purpose.

"I am often inclined to think," he said, "when I read newspaper reviews, that no one should be allowed to criticise contemporary verse until he has shown that he can produce verse himself."

"On the principle, I suppose, that we should set a thief to catch a thief?"

"No, Mr. Mallory—I speak of poets, not plagiarists. But on the principle that only they who create the beautiful can appreciate beauty."

"Ah! You think men should pass through poetry as an apprenticeship to journalism? It is a compliment to the profession, Mr. Dulcimer, but I fear if your suggestion were carried out, the public might think it had to pay too dearly for its papers."

This blasphemy Mr. Dulcimer disdained to answer directly. "In no case," he said, "can I accept the penny-a-liner's comments upon poetry."

"I never accept anything from him at all," said the Editor of the *Forum*. "But seriously, Mr. Dulcimer, unless poets will be content to make copy in the wilderness—unless they will go and dwell beside the springs of Dove—and I am sorry to say they seem to prefer the banks of Thames—they must be content to unlearn in suffering what they have taught in song. The evolution of civilisation is marked by the gradual disuse of verse. Science, philosophy, history, and in a great measure fiction, are now embodied in prose—and not, as was the case when they were comparatively worthless, in verse. Rhymes after all, Mr. Dulcimer, are only jingling fetters on truth."

"I cannot accept your metaphor," said Mr. Dulcimer dreamily; "I should rather compare each of the Poet's rhymed lines to a Wave—a lucid Wave from the Infinite Ocean of Beauty and Truth, falling in music upon what Shelley calls 'the light sands of consciousness.'"

"I know nothing about the Ocean you mention," said Mr. Mallory drily. "But I do know that there is a pernicious swarm of versifiers who are constantly adding to the Ink Ocean of Literature. And that is an Ocean"—he went on—"you will find the observation in my *Martyred Humanity*—which very often seems to swell under lunar influence, and which very seldom casts up a pearl upon the Sands of Time."

"By Jove, Mallory!"—exclaimed Mr. Arden—"why, that sounds like poetry! You are rivalling Dulcimer himself!"

"It is exceedingly kind of you to say so, Arden. But no one knows what I have had to endure from the metromaniacs—it would take a new Dunciad to do justice to the theme. Now, for example, take that book of verse noticed in to-day's issue—"

"Oh, don't let us take that now, Mallory," interposed Mr. Arden hastily—"pass that—" but Mr. Dulcimer cut him short. The poet's eyes flashed and his brow darkened, as he said in a voice tremulous with passion—"I, sir, am the author of the volume you speak of!"

"Now the fat's in the fire!"—muttered Mr. Arden below his breath; "confound the fellow." But whether he referred to the poet or the editor, Lynn, who overheard him, was left to conjecture.

Mr. Mallory did not wince. He had hitherto only vaguely suspected Mr. Dulcimer of verse-guiltiness; and had he known who was the author of the anonymous 'Roses,' he might have selected the strains of some other singer to point his moral. He had been somewhat surprised by Mr. Dulcimer's deliberate effort to provoke him; now that was explained. The mistake did not cause Mr. Mallory any very poignant grief. He knew he had been brusque with Dulcimer, almost to the verge of rudeness. That gentleman's sneers had not irritated him in the very least; and as for arguing seriously with a poet, Mr. Mallory would as soon have dreamt of arguing with a poodle. But at Mr. Arden's table, the editor of the *Forum* was accustomed to play the tribune in his most pronounced—what those who knew, and hated him, called his 'barricade'—manner. He had merely been doing so on the present occasion, and Mr. Dulcimer had chanced to be the victim. That was all.

Only Mr. Mallory, however, was unembarrassed for the moment. There was an awkward gap in the conversation, which the host hastened desperately to bridge over. Addressing himself to the offended poet, and beginning with the usual formula—"Try that claret"—Mr. Arden rushed again into the unfailing topic of Wine. This time he met with a response.

When the Editor next spoke, he addressed himself to Lynn.

"I should very much like, Mr. Lynn," he began, "if you could give me the results of your observation of the religious Revival, as they term it, which has of late flared and foamed in the North."

Lynn stated that in Shawkirk the people had apparently been occupied for the most part with politics, in view of the approaching election.

"That is, so far, good," said Mr. Mallory; "but the present divorce of politics from Religion is nevertheless, in my estimation, a perilous thing."

"Religion?"—queried Lynn, remembering his uncle Mr. Ingleby, and the Editor's own remarks at an earlier period of the evening.

"When I speak of Religion," explained Mr. Mallory, "I speak, of course, of Positivism; and no man is more deeply convinced than I that it is only by a religious movement that Society can be saved. Otherwise, as things at present are, it will simply commit suicide in an orgy of money-making."

Here Mr. Dulcimer saw an opportunity to differ from his late antagonist, and to show that he had not been crushed in their previous encounter.

"Goethe, now," he said, musingly, "held—and I agree with Goethe—that Art must take the place of Religion in moulding and ennobling our modern life. Have you no faith, Mr. Mallory, in the influence of culture?"

"True religion includes culture," said the Editor. "What is commonly labelled 'culture' is merely the lisping languor of the dilettante *plus* the impudence of the prig. Do you for one moment think, Mr. Dulcimer, that you can lighten the lives of the suffering army of toilers by the cooing of a love-sick troubadour? That may do for the knights and ladies, but what of the peasants of Provence? Politics, Mr. Dulcimer, are not a thing of sonnets—a tissue of madrigals. And they are no longer a May-game for aristocrats—the gilded ephemera which still flutter amid the debris of feudalism. Now they are lifted above that, yet still they want to be touched and inspired by the breath of religion. Positivism—"

Here Mr. Mallory set forth his favourite ideas at considerable length. He next went on to discuss the policy pursued by Britain in Ireland, South Africa, and the East—or, as he chose to describe it, the Irish Crime, the African Crime, and the Indian Crime—to his own great satisfaction, and the utter confusion of Mr. Ericson, who had ventured to express a less pessimistic view.

Mr. Mallory showed no alacrity to join the ladies; and lingered behind, when the others went, to smoke a cigar with Mr. Arden. Drawing-rooms he professed to regard with contempt. People, he said, met to converse—in other words, to listen to him—not to make a pretence of listening to bad music. The drawing-room was an institution which would speedily be swept away by the car of progress —but which, in the meantime, was a check to the cause of Woman's Rights.

When at last Mr. Mallory came upstairs, Miss Arden smiled upon him with seeming delight.

"You are just in time," she said. "Mr. Dulcimer has promised to sing us a serenade—one he has translated himself, and set to a Spanish air. I know you would be sorry to have missed it."

Mr. Mallory started, bowed, gave a ghastly smile—and then, suppressing his emotion with a strong effort, betook himself to the extreme end of the room. It was little better than an insult to ask *him*, the Tribune, the Editor and Philosopher, the rebuilder of the social edifice, to sit silent and listen to the warbling of this pitiful poetaster.

Mr. Dulcimer, who had a really fine and highly-trained voice, began his song. Lynn thought he looked a supremely ridiculous figure, bending over Camilla at the piano, and peering at the music through his eye-glass. Mr. Mallory, to judge from his face, held a similar opinion.

Mr. Dulcimer repeatedly adjured the moon of the summer night to shine through the lattice of a certain chamber, and awake the fair one slumbering within. The orange-groves, he said, wafted their perfume; the myrtles lay in dark shadow; he, outside in the white moonshine, awaited but a sign from his mistress's hand, as the guerdon of his song. Mr. Mallory listened for a moment with a look of disgust; then turned to Lynn, who was standing near him.

"I should like you to call on me at the office to-morrow, Mr. Lynn," he said; "three o'clock will suit you?—very good. We shall have a talk, and see if we are to suit one another. Of course we may not suit one another at all—but I hope we shall. It depends on yourself entirely. By the way, Mr. Lynn, do you happen to have given much thought at any time to the questions connected with the present political effacement of Spain?"

Lynn's heart leaped within him. The Editor, he imagined, must be going to entrust him with an article on Spanish politics, as his first piece of work on the *Forum*.

"Oh, yes," he said; "I have read a good deal about it—and written, too." Lynn bethought him of a certain Prize Essay on 'The Lapse of Spain.' He did not like, however, to mention this work to Mr. Mallory. He was not quite certain how much value the Editor would put on a Prize Essay.

"Because—" Mr Mallory went on, not appearing to notice Lynn's response—"it has just occurred to me that here we have some additional light thrown on this interesting question. He"—indicating Dulcimer—"is, it appears, singing a serenade—a Spanish serenade. What else can you expect of a nation which produces and tolerates such things, except that it should inevitably slide back into social sloth and political impotence? Can you wonder, listening to such stuff as that, that Spain is at this moment a constitutional monarchy—a country where they collect the watches, instead of the tickets, of railway passengers at their roadside stations—and where they have a newspaper called *La*

Mañana—yes, sir, positively called *La Mañana—The To-morrow!*"

Mr. Mallory had raised his voice somewhat at the close of his remarks; and a distinct "Hush!" came from the lips of Mrs. Chevenix. The Editor glared around him; and as Mr. Dulcimer had now finished his last invocation of the orb of night, departed for the office of the *Forum*.

"I am deeply grateful to you for this evening," he observed to Mr. Arden, on his way downstairs. "We had really a most curious menu of character—the poor Anglo-Indian with his untutored mind; a poet in a fine frenzy; and a silent Hyperborean. The Hyperborean was, on the whole, the least objectionable."

"Then you think my young friend will do?"—asked Mr. Arden.

"I cannot answer, Arden, for your young friend. He is one of the impulsive youths who think they can open the world-oyster with a pen—an interesting phenomenon, 'so fresh and green in this old world of ours.' I will take him on trial—only on trial, of course; that is understood. He is coming to see me to-morrow. Good-night—thanks, I *will* take a cigar."

Mr. Arden, returning to the drawing-room, began to talk about Mallory to Lynn, whose brain was still bewildered by the Editor's wild and whirling declamations.

"I am thunder-struck," said Lynn, "by Mr. Mallory's religious opinions. They seemed so strangely like nonsense, you know. And I should think them utterly at variance with his character—as they are with the tone of his paper, and with his views on other things."

"Mallory might be a Christian," said Mr. Arden, "so far as allowing his 'religion' to interfere with his daily work is concerned. I suppose he must find this craze about Positivism pay him in some way. Besides, he likes to take people's breath away by his statements, and to make them talk a lot about him."

"But is it not indiscreet to avow the opinions he does?"

"It would be set down as madness—or, what is worse, as bad form—if he were not known to be a clever and influential man. As it is, I fancy that kind of talk makes him more of a personage in society. Which is what Mallory wants."

"Then you don't think he believes it himself?"

"I think he believes *in* it. I fancy he finds it a relief from his serious work. We like to kick up our heels somewhere, as a change from the mill-round, you know. But in reality, there is nothing fantastic about Mallory. There is no shrewder, sharper man going—he is a man of the world to his finger-tips."

Lynn had not much speech with Camilla that evening. Mr. Dulcimer claimed her presence at the piano, and hovered about her with watchful pertinacity. But to make up for this, Mr. Arden's manner to Lynn was of the most friendly kind. He gave him much good advice, of a worldly character; and expressed the warmest hopes for his success on the *Forum.* The references he made to his roof were now altogether hospitable.

"I trust you will consider this house always open to you, now you are in London," he said to the young man when bidding him good-night. "Come to us whenever you have nothing better to do. I shall always be pleased to see you—and my daughter—that, I suppose, goes without saying!"

Lynn expressed his gratitude. He considered this last playful remark of Mr. Arden's highly significant—as, indeed, it was—and went off, elated, to his hotel in the Strand.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE *FORUM.*

Is there a more enviable being in all the realm of Fancy than the average young author of fiction? We all know him; we have all watched him climb Fame's templed steep, swift and sure-footed—spurning probability and tossing fact aside with a gay regardlessness peculiarly his own. Wonderful as a poet, wonderful as a novelist, he is, perhaps, most wonderful of all as a journalist. He has only to lose his money in order to master the art of writing prose. He has only to spend his days in idlesse, languid or boisterous, in order to become an adept in all political lore. Who has not marvelled at that knowledge, which springs up in a night, like the Prophet's gourd?—at that wit, which makes even editors bland, yet never escapes into dialogue?—at that style, so promptly and unlaboriously acquired, and yet so ripe withal, so bright and telling, that it might almost do justice to the subject of its possessor's miraculous career?

True, the young journalist of fiction is not always such an one as this. Sometimes he does really appear to merit his success. What he says does not invariably beget distrust of what is said about him. But be he what he may—and this is his unvarying characteristic—he seems always able to go where he likes, and to do what he likes. You may find him anywhere, provided it be only far enough from newspaper offices. In many cases, he appears to spend half his days in the country; and, in general, he is always willing, and at any moment able, to make a run across to the Continent. Happy, happy mortal! He knows no more of the nightly millround of the press than the gods that lie beside their nectar.

Arthur Lynn was familiar with the ways of this fortunate youth. He admitted to himself that the picture might be somewhat fanciful; that the work might be harder, the reward less solid, the editor less pliant in the real world, than in the world as it wags in three volumes. Still, he was fain to believe that there must be "something in it." He did not realise that the choice of journalism as a profession meant the final renunciation of his cherished Gospel of Leisure. At college, he had won prizes for his essays and verses. At the Philopolemic debating society, he had been reckoned an especially fluent exponent of politics. Lynn was still sufficiently young to remember those academic triumphs. Other men whom he had heard of—men who had taken no prizes whatsoever at college, only a paltry degree—had succeeded in those paths on which he was about to enter. Barring an incapacity for understanding, or even feigning to understand, statistics, he was surely better equipped than they.

Mr. Mallory, in speaking to him of his 'work' as the successor to the martyred

Wicks, had left the nature of that work clothed in mystery. "You'll have a lot of copy to read, you know"—he had explained to Lynn, at their interview the day after Mr. Arden's dinner-party—"and summaries to write, and so on. Sugden—he is our chief sub-editor—will show you all about it. You won't be of much use to us for a time, you know. And it is just possible, Mr. Lynn, let me say to you, that we may not suit each other after all. Everyone has not the newspaper instinct, and you are very young. But we shall see. Come along on Monday night, between seven and eight o'clock—we begin to set at half-past seven. That is all, I believe. Good morning."

It was on Friday that Lynn had his interview with the Editor. The intervening days he devoted to a study of the *Forum*—especially of the leading articles. Now, the peculiar thing about a good leading article is this, that everyone thinks he could write it if he tried, and that almost nobody can. Lynn was not at first very greatly impressed by the articles in the *Forum*. Some of them, he owned, were above his powers at present—but not immeasurably so. Others he believed were by no means better than he could himself produce; that was, of course, with time—a good deal of time. In one he detected an incorrect allusion to a play of Molière's. That was encouraging. He would not commit errors such as that, at least.

Still, as the Monday evening drew nigh, Lynn somehow felt less buoyant than he had expected. He began to remember that those essays which had won him so much applause had wanted a good deal of re-writing and re-polishing before they were submitted to their judges. He reflected on the mental travail which certain periods had cost him before they were rounded to his liking. The reflection was slightly perturbing. He had often pictured himself dashing off brilliant articles at dead of night, and going home tranquilly to sleep, while men were talking of them everywhere. But now it seemed, somehow, as if there might be a good deal less dash and a good deal more effort about the performance. Indeed, it might be well, after all, if Mr. Mallory did *not* ask him to write an article that very night, before he had gained a little insight into the ways and working of the paper. Thus reflecting, he set out for the office of the *Forum.*

The office of the *Forum*—a large dingy building, with the name of the paper painted in huge letters across its front—stood in one of the narrow streets which run down from the Strand to the river. As Lynn approached the scene of his future labours, he began to realise that there were drawbacks in the life of the actual journalist. It was a beautiful summer evening; and he felt inclined to envy the numerous young men he met on his way, released from toil, and obviously bent on pleasure. When he came near the office, he thought he would not go in, just yet; he would enjoy his freedom a little longer. As he sauntered along the Embankment, a fresh soft wind was ruffling the river, and a few stars were twinkling in the misty green of the western sky. That wind and that sky tantalised him. He wished that he were 'stepping westward.' It was an evening when he ought certainly to be floating, with Camilla, down some shady, glassy reach of the river. The incompatibility between twilight meetings and work on a morning paper had not previously occurred to his mind. Just about this time, too, Morton would probably be running across the frith in the *Chloe*, with some of their old friends on board, for one of the quaint, red-roofed fishing towns on the Sprayton shore. No doubt they would have a merry evening. Of course, these were trivial things; and he—had he not planted his foot on the ladder at last? was he not about to 'begin life,' by helping to mould the opinion of the great British public? Still, Lynn felt a trifle melancholy as half-past seven chimed from spire to spire, and he turned him away from the river to the abodes of nightly toil.

The *Forum* office was a rather confined place, and the air in it felt uncomfortably

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close. Lamps were burning within, as Lynn entered the dark passage, and made his way upstairs. He found himself at a long counter, behind which several men were seated at desks, writing. A pert youth informed him that Mr. Mallory was out, and that it was uncertain when he would return. When he had set forth the object of his visit, the pert youth led him to the room of the sub-editor, who was expected to arrive immediately.

Though without it was still daylight, the blinds were drawn, and several gas-jets were burning in the room. The furniture consisted of two heavy, leather-covered tables with desks, three chairs, a map of Europe, a stand with the file of the *Forum*, and two large, empty baskets, placed on the floor near the desks. On one of the tables lay a considerable pile of papers; and behind it was a hollow wooden pillar, with a small hoist in it, communicating with the composing-room above.

Lynn sat down, and looked curiously about him. The room was unventilated, and the gas made it uncomfortably hot. At first no sound was audible, save a faint clicking noise which came through the partition. Then a Voice made itself heard. It repeated one word—the word "Copy," with the first syllable much prolonged—in a tone at once earnest and reproachful. The Voice, Lynn discovered, came from a speaking-tube, also communicating with the regions upstairs.

Presently a tall young man and a short young man entered. They stared at Lynn; laughed, and exchanged inanities; and, having shown how thoroughly they were at their ease, departed. As they went, Lynn caught the words, "the new sub"—and their use of the contraction jarred upon him. He began to feel the situation growing irksome. The clicking sound from the telegraphic instruments next door continued; the hoist rattled inside its pillar, vainly jerked up and down by impatient hands above; and the sepulchral Voice at intervals called "Copy!"—down the tube.

Then the rattling and the calling ceased; and there appeared a thin, dark, melancholy man, in his shirt-sleeves. He gazed fixedly at Lynn, who sat doing nothing; turned over the papers on the table; seized some of them, and departed muttering gloomily. The purport of his remarks appeared to be that all things were against him, and that the *Forum* could by no possibility appear on the morrow morning. This saturnine individual, as Lynn afterwards found, was the foreman printer, ravenous for manuscript, so that he might make a good start with the 'setting' of the paper.

At last—when Lynn had been seated solitary in the room for about twenty minutes, which seemed sixty—a man rushed in, hot and breathless. This was Mr. Sugden, who had come late, and was eager to make up for lost time.

"You are Mr. Lynn?"—he panted; "I shall show you—about the work—by-and-bye. I've been kept behind time a bit, you see, and it will be a big paper to-night—

Gladstone, you know"—he shook his head and sighed as he said this—"great speech at L——. There will be a terrible crush. I must send something up to the men at once, but—"

"Copy!"—moaned the Voice. Mr. Sugden said no more, but sat down at his desk, and went to work upon the pile of manuscript before him.

Mr. Sugden was about thirty years of age, but his hair was already sprinkled with grey, and his eyes had lost their lustre. His features were commonplace; his face was pale; and his expression betokened a kind of stolid shrewdness.

Lynn watched him closely as he worked, but could not understand what he was doing. He lifted a pile of broad, rustling sheets, glanced over them, wrote and scored on them with a pencil—then packed them into the hoist, and sent them flying aloft. He seemed to skim through masses of manuscript with a rapidity that was nothing short of miraculous. It made Lynn almost giddy to watch him. Sheet after sheet was crumpled up and tossed into the waste-basket—bundle after bundle was unfolded, its contents read and apparently altered and condensed, and so despatched upwards. Very soon the table was partially cleared. Lynn had sat for nearly an hour, silent, idle, and wondering.

"Keep your hand well on the copy, Sugden,"—said a peremptory voice behind him. Lynn turned, and saw Mr. Mallory.

"How are you?"—said the Editor, nodding to him. "Sugden, give Mr. Lynn something to do, will you—by-and-bye; some of the paragraphs. What are you getting?"

"Gladstone. He's coming in on two wires," said Mr. Sugden, going on steadily with his work. "Vaughan's at him"—he added.

"Ah!—all right. What are they taking in the next room?"

"Crisis in Paris."

"Very good. I'm going to write about that. Tell them to send it to me. Now, remember, Sugden—the measurement is high already;

sit well down on the copy—just keep him going, that's all. Keep your hand on it."

Mr. Sugden, to whom this injunction was delivered nightly, answered no word; and the Editor departed to his own room.

Lynn was struck with the difference between Mr. Mallory's manner within and without the office. Without, he discoursed in a style of slow volubility, and treated his listeners to what might be termed a species of ornate impertinence. Within, he eschewed the epigrammatic; was curt, unaffected, and thoroughly practical. He spoke sharply and quickly, and even dispensed with arching his eyebrows.

"Look here, Mr. Lynn," said Sugden after a time—"you might take these 'flimsies,' and cut them down to about a half. Put them right, you know, and give the different paragraphs headings. Don't bother over them—they aren't worth much to us."

"You mean I am to improve the style, if I can, and abridge them?"

"Just so. We've got to boil everything

down to the bare bones to-night. Fire ahead —cut and carve—you'll soon come into the thing."

Lynn took the 'flimsies'—the thin, grey, rustling sheets of telegrams which he had seen Sudgen disposing of with such apparent ease. He deciphered them with extreme difficulty. The composition was certainly wordy and slovenly. Lynn questioned if it were possible to correct and condense the paragraphs without re-writing each—and, plainly, there was no time for that. How Sugden could deal with these sheets as he did seemed inexplicable to Lynn. How long it took him to read, correct, and curtail these 'flimsies' he never knew; but he knew that he had never had such hard work in his life before.

And this was sub-editing! This was journalism! In none of his visions had Lynn ever prefigured anything like this. No lecturing of statesmen, no barbing of phrases against the foes to progress, no interweaving of the satiric with the didactic! In whatever department of the *Forum* office that portion of the work might be carried on, it was evidently not in Mr. Sugden's room.

Lynn at last returned the paragraphs to Sugden, with some diffidence. "I don't know if they are right, yet," he said—"I'm sure I wish I could help you," he added, noticing the heavy additions made within the last hour or so to Sugden's paper deposits.

"Oh, you'll soon do that," said the sub-editor quite cheerfully; "you'll drop into it, never fear. I'm quite fit to tackle all that's coming. But look here, now. You are too particular, you know. We haven't *time* to cut the stuff down that way."

Here Sugden took one of the paragraphs, drew his pencil down half the sheet, wrote two words at the top, and sent it from him. Another, which Lynn had almost entirely rewritten, and that with no small care, he had the pleasure of seeing consigned to the fast-filling basket—with the remark that it was "worth nothing to the *Forum*—nothing at all."

Sugden give him another batch of 'flimsies,' with which he suffered and toiled as he had with the former. Now and then a reporter would enter and talk to Sugden, who answered without raising his head or ceasing to ply his pencil. But the conversation distracted Lynn grievously.

The hours crept on, and the office became busier. Reporters passed in and out; telegraph messengers appeared and disappeared. Then the foreman printer entered, planted himself opposite Sugden's desk, and made a speech. He stated that two of his men were down with fever; that he was short-handed; that he could not stand this kind of work any longer; and that the *Forum* would certainly not appear on the morrow. Mr. Sugden wrote on unmoved. The foreman, he knew, was a pessimist; and he had heard his jeremiad before.

It seemed as if twelve o'clock would never come. Lynn had studied hard in his day, but he had never had a night's work such as this. He felt the urgent need of getting through the copy, and he wished to help Sugden all he could.

But he made what seemed to him very little progress. His head ached with the constant strain of trying to read the almost illegible writing on the 'flimsies.' The contractions employed by the telegraph clerks bewildered him; the composition was an outrage on his sense of style; he found himself for ever being baffled in the attempt to decide what should and what should not 'go in.' He began to wonder how men could get through this ordeal nightly, without losing their reason. He looked at Sugden, driving through his work with the placid regularity of a machine, and told himself that he would never, *never* make an efficient sub-editor. He began to have a strong fellow-feeling with Wicks, his predecessor in office. The work, he felt, was beyond his range. And yet, Lynn had been accredited with a fine intellect. His old admirers—who had been as ignorant as himself of that branch of journalism known as sub-editing—would have been strangely surprised could they have known of his sufferings that first night on the *Forum.*

And yet Lynn felt that, after all, there might be a fascination in the life. As the night wore on, he became aware that a fierce fight was going on in the office of the *Forum*—a fight with time. Every one seemed hurried and driven, from the telegraph clerks who sat scribbling desperately in the next room, to the Editor himself, who occasionally looked in, uttered some remark in a jargon which Lynn did not understand, and vanished. He himself caught the excitement of it all, and felt that he was not altogether non-combatant. There is indeed a stirring charm about night-work in a newspaper office, which falls even on the sub-editor, if he has any imagination at all; and in this quality Lynn was not deficient. In that little world of brightness, and noise, and bustle, he could fancy himself sharing in the making of great events—helping, while other men were sleeping, to work the machinery that drives society along the grooves of change. There was something in the atmosphere of heat and hurry, the continual passing to and fro, the rattling of the hoists, the breathless 'click-click' of the instruments, the chance-medley of voices in rapid talk—that seemed to lift one away from the hum-drum world wherein the mass of men are fain to plod, and chaffer, and drowse. There was something inspiriting in the sense of helping to fight the battle which was being steadily won in the office of the *Forum*. The others, too, seemed to do their fighting blithely. They all, except the Editor and the foreman printer, joked and chatted as they hurried to and fro.

Sometime after midnight, the building began to vibrate with the rumbling of the steam-press.

"They're throwing off the outside sheet, now," said Sugden. "That last measurement"—he added, looking at a scrap of paper that had been sent him down the hoist—"was devilish high. There will be a row directly, I should not wonder."

And there was. Down came the night-foreman, frantic and perspiring, his shirt-sleeves rolled above his elbows.

"The paper is over-set!"—he cried. "You see what you've done. Now, then, what am I to do? Tell me. How am I to get to press? I knew how it would be, the way the copy's been coming up! Do you want this paper out to-morrow, or do you not? What am I to take off? When are you coming up to show me?"

Then the Editor entered.

"You've done it again," he said; "you've gone and over-set the paper. I hope you're happy now. Get down all the copy that's gone out of this room in the last half-hour! Get it down at once, I say, and cut it to pieces! Tear that copy into ribbons, Sugden, do you hear? Put every one of your d—d paragraphs into lines—do you understand?—literally into lines! Good God!—how is he to get to press if you go on in this way? It's not sub-editing, Sugden—a ploughman could sub-edit as well with a pitch-fork. Haven't I been telling you all night to sit well down on that copy? It's monstrous—simply monstrous!"

Mr. Sugden, than whom an abler sub-editor never sat at a desk, and who was not, in point of fact, responsible for the over-setting of the paper, rose with an unmoved face, and proceeded upstairs to see what he could 'take off.' The foreman followed, still prophesying dark things. The Editor continued to rail against his staff in general, in terms which showed an equal disregard for Lynn's presence and for the Religion of Humanity.

In the midst of this denunciation a sharp-featured, bright-looking man entered, with his hat on his head, and a cigar between his lips. This was Mr. Vaughan, one of the leader-writers, who had been devoting his mind to a criticism of the Prime Minister's provincial oratory.

Mr. Mallory turned upon him.

"Do you think this place is a smoking-room, Vaughan? You'll drive me mad among you. I've been interrupted in the pleasing task of restoring your article to sanity—putting in 'noes' and 'nots' before all the verbs and adjectives, you know—"

Mr. Vaughan nodded, and smiled approvingly.

"I've been interrupted," Mr. Mallory went on, "by the news that the sub-editors have gone and over-set the paper. Look here, now—in your article, you have that allusion to the Old Man of the Sea again. I'm getting tired of that old man—this is the third time of late you've dragged him into a leader. I wish you'd drown him, and have done with it. Can't you rack your brains, now—make a supreme effort—and get something that will do instead, for once?"

"It was the Old Man with the Ass this time, I think you'll find"—said Mr. Vaughan blandly. "Still, *toujours perdrix*, of course."

"You know as well as I do, Vaughan, that what the public like is an allusion they don't understand—at least, they like it now and then. Now, will you just buckle to, and give Sugden a hand to cut down the infernal rubbish he's been pitch-forking upstairs all night?—and be as sharp as you can about it!"

"How silver-sweet sound editors' tongues at night!"—murmured Mr. Vaughan, as his Chief departed. "Ever met Mallory in society, Mr. Lynn?"

"Yes—once."

"Ah. Now you are getting a front view of him, and I hope you like it."

"How do you mean?"

"I mean that here, in the office, he doesn't put on side. I must introduce myself, since the Chief hasn't thought it worth his while—my name is Vaughan. I have heard about you. I hope we shall be friends."

Lynn, who was much taken by Vaughan's frank, easy manner, was responding to these advances, when Mr. Sugden re-entered with a mass of manuscript. Vaughan took part of it; and they fell upon it, tooth and nail. Lynn sat watching them in amazement. Very soon the copy was cut down to what Mr. Mallory had metaphorically described as 'ribbons.' Presently a dull, heavy sound made itself heard above.

"They're stereotyping now," Vaughan explained to Lynn; "that's the last roar of the heavy artillery, at the end of the battle! The battle's over and won—the penny-a-liner has gone to the basket, where all good penny-a-liners go—we have struck with the pencil and slain with the shears, and the heart of the sub-editor is glad!"

"She's away!"—cried the foreman down the tube.

"She's away!"—said Sugden, as he lighted his pipe, and a smile, for the first time that night, rested on his visage.

"She's away!"—echoed Vaughan—"she's away!—may her circulation never be less in the land! Now, Mr. Lynn, tell us truly—is not this life more sweet than that of painted pomp?"

"From this night forth," said Lynn, "I abjure the society of duchesses. I believe I am solely answerable for six lines—certainly not more than ten, in to-day's issue. A proud thought!"—he added, smiling; "but I feel my responsibility. I am not sure that there isn't something wrong in them."

"You've got to go through the mill, you know," said Vaughan, seating himself on the table, and lighting another cigar. "I've been through it. It's not a life of lilies and languor, but to my mind there's no life like it. There's Sugden, now"—indicating that gentleman with a flourish of his cigar—"he is never happy away from that desk of his—that butcher's block, where he hacks and hews at the poor correspondents. He is bringing their wives and little ones to the workhouse, and themselves to paupers' graves. By the waters of Fleet Street they sit down and weep, but they cannot soften that fell Fury with the abhorred shears!"

Mr. Sugden smoked on in silence. Then he removed his pipe from between his teeth, and observed with gravity:—

"It was the War did it. He had to try to reconcile the war-telegrams with the map, for his summary. He can't recover (of course, you can see that), but we let him run about the office. He is quite harmless; and the Chief felt that was the least thing he could do, seeing it was in his service he had lost it —his reason, you know!"

"*Surge, Carnifex!*"—laughed Mr. Vaughan, alighting from the table. "A breath of morning moves—like the planet of love, I am beginning to faint—let us tear ourselves from these festal scenes!"

Already the night-porter was putting out the lights. As they went downstairs, Vaughan remembered that he had left a book in his room, which he had meant to dispose of that day. The others went back with him.

"This is my den, you see," he observed; "a poor one, but mine own. And here's the book—a volume of trash I had to write about the other day—*The Roses of Sybaris.* There's an elegy in it, Mr. Lynn, which would make any ordinary mortal in love with death. Now then, let us go—you have seen the desk from which the bolts are hurled."

Lynn glanced at the desk in question. There was a sheet of paper lying on it, covered with Mr. Vaughan's hand-writing. It was not, however, part of any leading article. It was the rough draft of an address to the electors of Shawkirk, calling upon them to return as their representative Robert Arden, Esquire, of etc., etc.—if they would not prove false to the great and glorious principles of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.

CHAPTER XV.

AT THE BOROUGH.

At last the announcement was made to which Shawkirk and its sister boroughs had long been looking forward. Mr. Fletcher, the member, having been exiled for life to the Riviera by his doctors, had applied for the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds.

Mr. Arden's Shawkirk agent, Mr. Hislop, was not taken unawares. A contested election was always possible, and he had made his arrangements accordingly. But his hope was that a contest might be avoided, by securing for his client the undivided support of the Party—in other words, of the Liberal Committee.

Shawkirk, it should be explained, is the centre of an electoral group of boroughs, which look to it for light and leading. It would be impossible to conceive of a Liberalism more sturdy, more healthy, more robust —such were the epithets by which party speechmakers from without described it— than that of Shawkirk. The children in the Board Schools were brought up to revere the name of Mr. Gladstone. Reminiscences of that statesman's visit to the place formed the staple of conversation at all social gatherings. He was constantly referred to by a familiar sobriquet, or else by his name in full. The tea-cup from which he had drunk tea at the Provost's house was exhibited under a glass shade in that dignitary's drawing-room. The piece of drugget on which he had stood while delivering his great speech in the Corn Exchange was regarded by good Shawkirkers much as the Holy Carpet is by pious Mussulmans. It had been put up to auction, and sold, after a spirited competition, for a long figure.

There were a few Tories in Shawkirk, but they were rather liked than otherwise there.

So few they were, so impotent, so ludicrously out of their element, that a half-pitying, half-contemptuous kindness was accorded them by the robust generality. It was scarcely thought worth while even to point at them with the finger of scorn. A kind of antiquarian interest attached to them—such as might attach to specimens of a lower race dying out in the midst of a new civilisation. They did not even answer the purpose which the Helots did in ancient Lacedæmon, since young Shawkirk needed no such warning. "Ay," the burgesses would say with honest pride—"ay; there's no' mony Tories can live here"—as if the climate of the Happy Valley were fatal to certain kinds of vermin. In Shawkirk, even the publicans were Radical.

They had a Liberal Committee in Shawkirk, consisting of forty members, with whom lay the duty of selecting a representative and bringing him before the constituency. Mr. Macritchie and the Tory residuum were accustomed to refer to this organisation as "the Radical Caucus, sir"—but everyone else called it the Liberal Committee. Perfect harmony reigned in the Committee so far as devotion to the great leader and to the principles of Liberalism was concerned. But the Shawkirk Liberals, with all their enlightenment, were yet human; and local jealousies and rival ambitions *would* break out to trouble the peace of the chosen Forty, though hitherto these had not marred their unanimity of action. Two men were prominent in the municipal politics of Shawkirk—Mr. Ingleby of the Victoria Dyeworks, and Mr. Turpie of the Townhead Tannery. Between these two men, the most considerable personages in Shawkirk society, a bitter feud had raged for years. It had arisen out of the river pollution question. Mr. Ingleby, as an employer of labour, claimed the right to dye the stream that ran beside his works in any colour he pleased. Mr. Turpie, who was an enthusiastic angler, and through whose grounds the stream ran, sought an interdict against Mr. Ingleby. The latter, developing a sudden interest in sanitation, discovered that the odour from the Townhead Tannery was extremely hurtful to the health of those living near it; and sought an interdict against Mr. Turpie. Fierce was the strife that broke out between these powers of water and of air at every meeting of the local senate. At first, Shawkirk looked on, wondering what the end would be. Then sides were taken; each of the antagonists had his following, and each sought to thwart his rival in every possible way. The Provost of Shawkirk had been for many years a respectable nonentity; since Mr. Ingleby and Mr. Turpie regularly veto'd each other's appointment to that coveted post. They carried their antagonism into every public question that arose, every movement that was set on foot—save into the sacred cause of Liberalism. But even in the bosom of the Liberal Committee—of which neither was chairman, and could not be, without the other's consent—their rivalry had made itself felt before, and might again.

Mr. Turpie was looked on as Mr. Arden's chief supporter. He had presided at the meeting before which the presumptive candidate had delivered his address on "Tories and Turks." He had gone about for months past chaunting Mr. Arden's praise—lauding his wealth, his liberality, and his Liberalism to the skies. It was understood that he would use his influence to have Mr. Arden selected as the nominee of the Liberal Committee. Mr. Ingleby was also regarded as a friend of Mr. Arden's, though less pronounced in his friendship. When questioned on the subject, he had of late been wont to reply that he took very little interest in the present election, and did not intend going out of his way to interfere. Still, it was generally understood that Arden's candidature had the support of both the rival leaders, and was consequently almost certain of success.

No sooner, however, was the fact of Mr. Fletcher's resignation formally announced, than an element of uncertainty was imported into the situation. The Council of Forty was not the only political organisation existing in

Shawkirk. There was a working-men's club, which met weekly at the Salmon Inn, for the discussion of Imperial politics over whiskey-and-water. Among the members of this society were the leading men of the trades-unions. Sandy Tennant the slater was a conspicuous figure there—being, indeed, the recognised mouth-piece of the club at election times,—*the* "heckler," *par excellence*, of Shawkirk. It was the function of Sandy Tennant to epitomise the debates of the club, throwing them into the form of questions, to which "Yes" or "No" must be answered by the unfortunate candidate. This he did with the skill begotten of long practice; and the honour of representing the Shawkirk Boroughs in the House of Commons could not be gained without passing through the ordeal of Mr. Tennant's cross-examination. A political meeting at Shawkirk would have been judged incomplete without the presence of the inquisitorial slater, just as one at Tiverton would have been, without that of Lord Palmerston's butcher.

The ‘Saumon lads,’ as they were familiarly termed, constituted the extreme left wing of the Liberal Party in Shawkirk. The Danton of this Mountain, and a man of mark in the town, was Mr. Robert Sanderson; known from his avocation, which was that of a coal-merchant, as “Coal Rob.” No one who had studied the political life of Shawkirk needed any further sign of a coming election than this, that Mr. Sanderson appeared in the streets having his face washed, and wearing his Sunday clothes. “Eh, see tae Coal Rob!”—the burgesses would say at such times; and then would fall to speculating on the probable movements of this political leader.

No sooner had the news of Mr. Fletcher’s resignation reached Shawkirk, than Mr. Sanderson shut up the box at the railway in which he transacted business, stabled his two horses, removed the grime from his face, and donned his Sunday attire. His features, revealed to the public gaze only on such rare occasions as this, wore an expression of awful mystery. His bearing was that of one who is consciously rising to the occasion; his thoughts were apparently too deep for speech. Two days were spent by Mr. Sanderson in making a round of the Shawkirk bars. There he stood poised on one leg and resting his left elbow on the bar-counter, while in his right hand he held a tumbler of whiskey-and-water—saying nothing, apparently observing nothing; only looking straight forward into infinity,—sphinx-like, inscrutable. The silent homage of the multitude, the whispered tributes paid to his powers of speechlessness, left Mr. Sanderson apparently unmoved. Men durst not speak to him; durst only stand him drinks. The dumbness of the oracle fell upon his votaries. There was a general feeling that the eyes of Europe were at present fixed on Mr. Sanderson; that the hour had come, and the man with it. His proceedings were generally construed in a sense unfavourable to the prospects of Mr. Arden.

This view was fully borne out by what transpired on the evening of the second day. The Liberal Committee met. The cipher who was Provost for the time presided; Mr. Ingleby was absent. Mr. Turpie, in an eulogistic speech, submitted Mr. Arden's name to the meeting, and moved that he should be selected by the Committee as their candidate. This was duly seconded. Then Mr. Sanderson arose, and broke his forty-eight hours' silence. He had, he said, nothing to urge against Mr. Arden, except (1) that the working-men of Shawkirk wanted as their representative a tried and proved sympathiser with the Working-Man; and (2) that the working-men of Shawkirk wanted a representative who knew everything about every political question, which Mr. Arden, as they had every reason to believe, did not. Mr. Sanderson dilated on these points at considerable length; and ended by proposing that Bailie Trotter should be the nominee of the Liberal Committee. Mr. Sanderson was outvoted in the Committee by a majority of four to one. He then rose a second time, and made another speech, calmly ignoring the Chairman's call to order. He had expected no other treatment, he said, from a self-constituted body which was bent on filching the rights of the electors. If Capital rallied round Mr. Arden, Labour would rally round 'the Bailie;' and in all such contests, as Mr. Sanderson begged to remind the meeting, Labour invariably got its own way. They might nominate whomsoever they pleased, but the choice of the constituency would be found in the ballot-box. He —Sanderson—withdrew from the Committee in disgust; he was ashamed at having ever been enrolled among its members. He had no doubt at all that Bailie Trotter would contest the seat as an Independent Radical Labour candidate. He had as little doubt as to what the result would be. After which remarks Mr. Sanderson, accompanied by Sandy Tennant and six other friends, left the room amid uproar, and adjourned to the Salmon Inn.

Mr. Hislop at once telegraphed to his client:—"*Opposition threatened. Contest more than probable. Come at once.*"

Next day Mr. Arden's Address—which had been lying for some time all ready in his agent's hands—appeared in the *Border Warden* newspaper, and was placarded through the town. Below it, in the columns of the newspaper, and on every wall and hoarding in Shawkirk, appeared another Address, signed *Jabez Trotter*, in which that gentleman offered himself to the constituency, as a candidate for the honour of representing in the British Parliament the most literate, progressive, and enlightened of all boroughs. Bailie Trotter's address surpassed Mr. Arden's in its wealth of local reminiscence and allusion. Politically, the difference between them was this, that where the Advanced Radical Arden made one stride forward, the Advanced Radical Trotter took two jumps in the same direction.

Mr. Hislop despatched another telegram:—"*Trotter has issued address. Goes further than yours. Will have to make it up in speeches. Come at once.*"

The person thus chosen to represent the Shawkirk Mountain was one in whom the very Genius of Radicalism could scarcely have found a hero. Of politics as a science he knew nothing; of the national history he was equally ignorant; had he been 'heckled' as to the date of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, it is questionable if he could have given a satisfactory answer. But he could stand up with brazen effrontery in face of a crowded meeting, and repeat—until he himself was hoarse, and his audience nearly deaf—that the working-man was the very salt of the earth, the pink of creation; wronged, cheated, and trampled down, but noble in his sufferings, great in his toils, and terrible in his demand for justice, freedom, equal rights, shorter hours and more pay. By saying these things often enough and loudly enough, Bailie Trotter had won for himself a certain reputation.

Bailie Trotter was a native of Shawkirk. He had left that town in his boyhood for the neighbouring city, where he had shouldered and jostled his way upward in the social scale. He was now proprietor of an establishment called the Mastodon Warehouse—one of those emporiums with glaring red fronts, covered all over with gigantic black lettering, where everything is sold, from a pot to a piano; where the purchaser passes in between colonnades formed of rolls of carpet, under festoons of chairs and bannerets of flaming hearth rugs, and finds himself amid a multifarious assortment of beds, tables, wash-stands, etc., which have overflowed the premises, and poured out pell-mell upon the pavement. The Bailie contrived to throw the glamour of politics over his very business; he 'sold cheap' out of pure disinterested love for the working-man; as a working-man himself, he knew what were the wants of his class, and how to cater for them; his sole aim and aspiration, in keeping open the Mastodon Warehouse, was to free the working-man from the iniquitous extortion of the middle-class retailer.

There were many who believed that Bailie Trotter was an orator. In the city, he had become something of a celebrity, and had won his way to municipal honours. At ward-meetings where the proletarian element mustered strong, the Bailie was the most popular of speakers. A roar of delight would break from the crowd of toilers, as the well-known burly figure lumbered to the front of the platform; as the coarse red face, set in a fringe of sandy-red hair, beamed upon the auditory; and the Bailie, with his arms revolving like the sails of a windmill—his idea of rhetorical gesture—and in a voice alternately raucous and strident—his idea of modulation—shrieked and bellowed and ranted in praise of the Demos, and in denunciation of the classes which toil not, neither do they spin. Among the working-men of the city, Bailie Trotter was looked on as a great champion of the masses, a heaven-sent politician, a "pillar of the people's hopes." There were but two sections of the populace which had seen fit to modify their views on this point. One section was the Bailie's *employés*, who soon discovered in his service the distinction between theory and practice.

The other was the Bailie's customers. The articles sold at the Mastodon were cheap; but this was, unfortunately, their only merit. Hence it resulted that as the Bailie's business extended, his popularity waned; since he never found a purchaser for his wares without losing a supporter of his opinions.

These things were, however, unknown to the people of Shawkirk, who had watched the Bailie's career with fond satisfaction, and had thronged to hear him on all occasions when he addressed public meetings in their town. Manhood Suffrage, Disestablishment, Free Education—on suchlike themes as these the Bailie had harangued his townsmen. Only on the Temperance Question he never touched at Shawkirk, reserving that for the clique to which he belonged in the city. Mr. Sanderson professed himself confident that Bailie Trotter would 'go in.' Together with his colleagues of the Salmon Club, he began an active canvass; secured the help of Mr. Smail, editor and proprietor of the *Border Warden;* who, like the Bailie, was a Baptist in religion, and who, refusing the proffered subsidies of Mr. Hislop, threw all the weight of his paper into the Independent Radical Labour scale. An article forthwith appeared in the *Warden*, casting grave doubt on the reality and sincerity of Mr. Arden's Liberalism; reflecting on his alien origin and his Southern sympathies; and issuing as the *mot d'ordre* to the constituency—"A Shawkirk man for Shawkirk!"

Mr. Sanderson, in his private communications with the Independent candidate, did not exhibit the same buoyant confidence which he professed in public. Unless by some means certain of the leading employers in the town could be won over from Arden's side, there was every probability that the nominee of 'the clique'—under this name of contumely Mr. Sanderson now referred to the organisation of which he had lately been a member—would end by carrying the seat. Turning over these things in his deep mind, Mr. Sanderson bethought him of Mr. Ingleby. That gentleman had great influence in the borough; had never declared himself strongly in Arden's favour, though he was understood to be his friend; had been significantly absent from the meeting of the Caucus; finally, was the known rival and foe of Mr. Turpie, Arden's chief supporter. Mr. Sanderson had an interview with Mr. Ingleby, but did not receive from him any encouragement. All Mr. Ingleby's instincts, as a capitalist and employer of labour, went dead against "that firebrand Trotter," as he chose to describe the Independent candidate. "He had a letter in his favour from the Prime Minister, had he?—well, in spite of that, he (Mr. Ingleby) was not going to support him. He did not meditate taking any active part in the coming election; and Mr. Sanderson would be good enough to regard this answer as final."

This Mr. Sanderson had perforce to do, and turned his energy into other channels. But now there ran a fresh rumour through the town, which fed the growing excitement of the Shawkirk electorate. At first it was regarded as a fiction too wild for credence—a bit of riotous fun played off by some mirthful spirit on the constituency. A Tory, it was reported, had been asked to stand for the seat. Such a thing had not happened since the Shawkirk Boroughs first returned a member to the reformed House of Commons. No Tory had ever thought of wasting his money in such an utterly hopeless attempt; none had dared to force a contest on the constituency, and then to face its righteous and openly-expressed indignation. The Liberal Committee—the club at the Salmon Inn—the political orators at the various bars, greeted this rumour with sceptical and derisive laughter. But presently, from one quarter and another, the rumour received confirmation. The name of the Conservative candidate was mentioned. Finally, it was currently reported that he had agreed to stand. The feelings of the Roman *cives* in view of a servile revolt might faintly represent those of the Shawkirk Liberals at the bare thought of such a movement on the part of their opponents. It was a matter, they felt, that had its serious, as well as its ludicrous side. The mere fact that a Tory had been nominated in Shawkirk—much less had gone to the poll—would be a blot on the hitherto unsullied escutcheon of the Boroughs. The condescending tolerance which the robust Liberalism of Shawkirk had extended to the harmless minority in its midst was changed all at once into an attitude of ferocious antagonism.

Encouraged by the division in the ranks of their opponents, Mr. Macritchie and the few who thought with him had resolved on doing what they had long desired to do—to show fight in the interests of Conservatism. This was the first instance in Shawkirk of a Radical split; and therefore the first opportunity given to Mr. Macritchie and his friends of bringing forward a candidate without courting such a defeat as would injure their cause more seriously than complete inaction. They had no hope of Shawkirk itself; but in another of the boroughs they might count on a respectable number of votes. If two Radicals went to the poll, they might not make such a bad appearance; at all events, the attempt would give an impulse to Conservatism; it would show to the world that that political creed was not extinct, even in Shawkirk; finally, it would "rile the Rads, sir"—so Mr. Macritchie put it—and be "something to have done." All they wanted was a candidate—and they had been fortunate in securing the very man for their purpose.

There were two noblemen who had seats and estates in the neighbourhood of Shawkirk—the Earls of Primavere and Leaderdale. Lord Primavere was a young man, comparatively—clever, 'pushing,' and Radical—much thought of by the Shawkirk Liberals, who forgave him his coronet in consideration of his principles. Lord Leaderdale was an elderly peer, who had held a minor office in more than one Conservative Administration. Lord Leaderdale was not popular in Shawkirk. He entertained a profound dislike for his noble neighbour, whom he considered "an ambitious, unscrupulous young man," and "a traitor to his Order."

Elvan Hall, Lord Leaderdale's family seat, stands about three miles out of Shawkirk, in a spacious well-timbered park, through which the river flows. The river had been the glory of the park, in days before Shawkirk grew into a manufacturing town. Since then, it had run in various shades of yellow, indigo, purple, and occasionally iris-hued; preserving, however, a constant uniformity of odour.

Fierce war had raged over this unlucky stream between the feudal superior of Shawkirk and his quondam vassals. Lord Leaderdale and the mill-owners fought it out in the Court of Session. Neither litigant gained his end. The angry Earl would have shut up every mill on the stream. The Shawkirk mill-owners claimed their right to flood it at all times and seasons with whatever abominations they pleased. The towns-people sided with Capital in this struggle against Land. There were other streams besides the Fala whereon the poacher might ply his gentle craft; and, as good Radicals, they rather approved of the disfigurement of anything so useless as a park. The decision of the Court, however, compelled Mr. Ingleby and his brother manufacturers to take measures for abating their pollution of the waters. Chemistry came to their aid, and showed them processes which actually made purification pay. This latter fact did not diminish their resentment against their noble opponent. Lord Leaderdale, on his part, took a strong prejudice against Shawkirk and its neighbourhood. At last, during one of his morning walks, he found the corpses of three poisoned fish, lying, white belly uppermost, on the bank. This ghastly sight goaded him into fury. He swore to live no longer beside "this unsavoury ditch," and "the nest of Radicals" that had defiled it. Elvan Hall saw its proprietor no more. Some years after, a real live fish was taken from the Fala below Shawkirk. They had the animal stuffed, and put under a glass case in the local museum—a well-merited tribute to its powers of vitality. But even this *lusus naturae* failed to tempt Lord Leaderdale from his absenteeism. Members of his family occasionally resided at Elvan Hall—he himself, never.

Lord Elvan, the Earl's eldest son, was better known in Shawkirk than his father, and was much more popular. He had commanded the local Volunteer corps, and had feasted officers and men at the annual training. He acted as steward at the race meeting; and on one occasion had carried off the Town Plate, riding his own horse. Among the younger members of Shawkirk society—the manufacturers' sons—Lord Elvan was a hero. The zoological collection in the museum was chiefly composed of victims which had fallen to his rifle in the Soudan and beyond 'the Rockies.' He was a favourite with the ladies, because he was so good-looking; with some of the men, because he was so affable; with others, because he was famous on the Turf. Lord Primavere enjoyed the same kind of renown, but not in Shawkirk. He never ran any 'platers' there—only talked politics; and did it with such a reasoned gravity, such an air of ripe and sober statesmanship, that the Shawkirk people somehow never pictured this sage, deeply-thinking young man, this future Minister—who knew all about political economy, and was the chosen friend of a great statesman to whom a horse was only an animal with four legs—as a ‘sporting peer,’ a steward of the Jockey Club, and a shining light at Tattersall’s. At Shawkirk, they reverenced Lord Primavere for his political lore; but they liked Lord Elvan —who had never said a word on politics in their hearing—because he shot elephants and other game, nodded to them in the street, and had won the Manchester Cup with a horse called Shawkirk.

Lord Elvan, as it happened, was residing at Elvan Hall when the election burst upon Shawkirk. He had come there with a friend for a few days’ partridge-shooting on his way from the moors to Doncaster. The thoughts of Mr. Macritchie and the heads of the Party at once turned to him, as the only candidate who had the ghost of a chance of success. After the jarring note in the Radical counsels made itself heard, there were communications between Mr. Macritchie and Mr. Haig, Lord Leaderdale’s man of business—between Mr. Haig and Lord Leaderdale—between Lord

Leaderdale and his son. The result of these was that on a certain evening Mr. Macritchie and five other gentlemen drove out in a waggonette to Elvan Hall—as a deputation to Lord Elvan.

The arrival of the deputation found Lord Elvan and his friend, the Hon. Mr. Whiffington, deep in the study of a report which had just been received from the former's trainer at Newmarket. This report discussed the condition and prospects of his Lordship's colt Van Diemen—popularly known as 'the Demon' —at present a hot favourite for the St. Leger. The colt, his Lordship was informed, stood his preparation to a marvel, and could at present "give tons to anything in the stable." But—and then followed a disquisition on certain points connected with the course on the Town Moor, and the colt's power to 'stay' it; together with a criticism of some recent performances of his great rival, Belle Poule —the filly with which Lord Primavere had that year won the Oaks.

Called away from these weighty matters to the question of politics, Lord Elvan gave the deputation a gracious reception. He had been prepared for their coming. That morning he had received a letter from his father, urging him to stand, now that discord had broken out among the adversaries; offering to pay all expenses; and putting it to him as a matter of duty, in the interests of "our Order," and as against the Primavere influence in Shawkirk. "I don't mind if I do," the young Lord had remarked to his friend Mr. Whiffington, after reading the paternal missive.

"You'll find it no end of a bore, Elvan," Mr. Whiffington had said.

"I don't know. There's any amount of fun to be got out of these Shawkirk people. On the whole—since my father has set his heart on it, and is prepared to find the money, and since Primavere won't like it, and it won't interfere with the September meeting—I think, Whiffington, that I'll stand."

The deputation being ushered in, and introduced by Mr. Haig the lawyer, Mr. Macritchie delivered an elaborately-prepared speech—

during which his friends muttered "Hear, hear" at intervals, and Mr. Whiffington became absorbed in a surreptitious study of *Bell's Life.* Lord Elvan observed in reply that he had long reflected deeply on these matters; that his earliest ambition had been to serve his Party and his country; and that the only doubt which troubled him was this, Was he worthy to represent them in the present crisis? Mr. Macritchie and his colleagues hastened to reassure his Lordship on this point; the Party, they said, would rally round him as one man—in which statement, no doubt, Mr. Macritchie somewhat underrated its strength—and supporters would flock to him from the broken ranks of their opponents. Thereon Lord Elvan placed himself without reserve in their hands, and ordered champagne. Having drunk success to the Cause, Mr. Macritchie and his co-deputationists departed in high spirits; and in this way a Conservative candidate was procured for Shawkirk.

Mr. Hislop did not attach much importance to this new phase of the contest. But he was seriously alarmed on discovering that 'Coal Rob' had relapsed into silence, and was making another round of the Shawkirk bars, with that air of abstraction and mystery which presaged some diabolical manœuvre.

Again Mr. Hislop telegraphed to his client: "*Tories will run a candidate. Lord Elvan. That of course nothing. But other side looking dangerous and evidently up to something. Trotter will take the field to-morrow. You must not be behind him. Get that letter if you can. Important.*"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LONE PEAK.

There was a time when the hopes of many men centred in the Lone Peak silver mine in Nevada. There was a time when Mr. Robert Arden, who had the honour to be one of the mine's promoters and directors, never uttered the words 'Lone Peak' save in the tones of honest pride. That was in the happy days when monthly dividends at the rate of 30 per cent. per annum—all out of the paid-up capital—were allotted to the fortunate shareholders; when the manager—and vendor—Mr. Cleveland, held converse with Nature in her sublimest moods, and wandered among the mountains like a Far West Wordsworth.

Mr. Cleveland's reports on the condition and prospects of the Lone Peak Mine showed the influence of the superb scenery amid which they were penned. Their forecasts were wild and grand as the Nevadan crests; their florid word-pictures seemed, as it were, steeped in the rich glow of the Nevadan sunsets. Endless trains of waggons, groaning under silver loads, rolled over the reams of his foolscap. For months the shareholders were dazzled with the sheen of imaginary ingots, and made dizzy by the whirling of visionary wheels. For Mr. Cleveland was careful to describe the vast machinery he had set to work in his inner consciousness, as well as the treasures he had dug out of Dreamland. He was determined that the shareholders should have the best bulletins he could give them. They had paid well for them; and it would not be his fault if they did not have good value for their money. And so, along with tales of treasure told *à la* Scheherazade, he took care to furnish passages made mystical with the polysyllables of the geologist and the technicalities of the engineer. For some months Mr. Cleveland excelled all living authors in adding to the gaiety of nations by his pen.

Then the day came when the shareholders were told that the enjoyment of monthly dividends at the rate of 30 per cent. per annum must, for the present, be deferred. A fortuitous Earthquake, Mr. Cleveland explained, had shattered the machinery, filled up the workings, and displaced the lode. Fresh capital was an imperative necessity; since the work must be done over again from the beginning, if the mine were ever to pay.

The name 'Lone Peak' at once became a scoffing among men. City editors said cruel things about Mr. Cleveland; angry correspondents wrote to the newspapers. The shares rushed below par with a frightful velocity; and the shareholders went about imploring High Heaven to shower down blessings on the heads of vendors, promoters, and directors alike.

Now the fact was that Mr. Arden had always believed in the future of this mine.

It may have been that the name 'Lone Peak' affected him through a latent vein of poetry in his nature. Or his almost sentimental preference for this venture may have been merely one of those curious weaknesses in the characters of great men which baffle the seeker after ideal consistency. Or it may have been that Mr. Arden had received private information concerning the mine, beyond what appeared in Mr. Cleveland's reports. It was, at all events, the case, that on none of his speculative schemes did his thoughts dwell so fondly as upon that distant shaft, sunk deep "into the rich heart of the West." When Mr. Cleveland cabled of "working contacts between the limestone and the porphyry"—of galleries lined with crystals of silver—of veins whence 70 tons of ore might be brought up daily, and of assays ranging from 60 to 80 per cent. pure silver—Mr. Arden had believed it all, or nearly all. When Mr. Cleveland cabled succinctly: "Mine ruined: all up"—his confidence remained unshaken. He went on believing in his pet mine, firmly—as firmly as Mr. Ingleby believed in the Bottomless Pit.

At last there came advices—private—from Nevada, which convinced Mr. Arden that he had done well to hope. According to these, Mr. Cleveland's earthquake had actually happened; but had done very little damage to machinery, there being very little machinery to damage. So far from ruining the mine, however, it had, by upheaving a lode of silver, made the Lone Peak for the first time a really valuable property.

When he read this report, Mr. Arden did what Byron says the Alps appeared to do—he "rejoiced o'er a young earthquake's birth." The winds and the tides, observes Gibbon, are on the side of the ablest navigator. The earthquakes, thought Mr. Arden, are on the side of the ablest speculator. He may preserve a Catonic calm amid the wreck of matter and the crash of shares; he may find a profit even in the cataclysm.

Mr. Arden's proceedings after he had received this intelligence were swift and decisive. Mr. Cleveland had vanished. A branch railway and a stamp mill which he had constructed in his reports were found non-existent—hence his disappearance. Before there was any chance of the mine yielding the very smallest return, a preliminary outlay on a great scale must be faced. Mr. Arden, sure of his information, did not hesitate. A movement to sell the property for what it would fetch, and wind up the company, was successfully resisted. A proposal to issue fresh stock, with a view to 'developing' the mine, was carried by sheer weight of proxies in face of all opposition. The services of a new manager, less poetically gifted than the former one, were secured. A glowing prospectus was issued to the shareholders.

But none of these things sufficed to restore any measure of confidence in the Lone Peak mine. There was no demand for the new stock, either among the present shareholders or the general public. Mr. Arden and his co-directors took up the stock, but almost no one else did. Mr. Arden remained unshaken in his conviction that several colossal fortunes might yet be made out of 'Lone Peaks'—if only this expenditure at the outset could be got over. But how to raise the money?—that was the question chiefly debated in those days at meetings of the Lone Peak Board of Directors.

Mr. Arden's thoughts were divided, at this time, between the prospects of the Nevadan silver mine and those of the Shawkirk election. Cablegrams from his agent 'out West' claimed his attention alternately with telegrams from his electioneering agent in Scotland. Both of these important affairs were weighing on his mind, as, one fine summer evening, instead of going straight home from the City to dine, he betook him to the office of the *Forum*.

"Is Lynn here?"—he asked the Editor; "can I see him?"

"He has not come yet, I believe," said Mr. Mallory, "but no doubt he will presently. You may wait here, if you like, Arden. Sit down."

"Thanks. How is he doing?"

Mr. Mallory shook his head.

"I'm afraid," he said, "he has not got the newspaper instinct."

"I am very sorry to hear that," said Mr. Arden; "I fancied he would have been good at writing, you know."

"Perhaps he may be. But he has not got the journalist's love of facts. I don't want him to write. There is Sugden, now—he has no more sense of style than an English peasant or a Scotch professor, and yet he is a model sub-editor—to me, simply invaluable."

"I don't understand about these things," said Mr. Arden.

"Of course not," said Mr. Mallory. "What we want in a sub-editor is plodding industry, combined with lynx-eyed vigilance in the detection of errors. Now, your friend has not got that. He was never meant for a sub-editor's room. He is the kind of man, I should say, who ought to be living in idleness on a thousand a year. I'm afraid he is a dreamer. All men who have the dreamy look and the kind of mouth he has must go to the wall. It is merely a question of time with them. Go they must."

"I hope there may be a few exceptions," said Mr. Arden; whereat the Editor shook his head more ominously than before.

Mr. Arden hastened to change the subject.

"By the way, Mallory," he said, "I wanted to ask you—have you seen Lord Primavere?—about that letter, you know?"

"Yes, Arden, I have seen him; and it is no good, I assure you. Primavere spoke about it to the Whips. They say they have put their foot in it—such was the expression used—more than once already, that way. And from a party point of view, they don't see any necessity for it in the present case."

"I understand," said Mr. Arden, bitterly. "They don't care whether the party is divided or not. Anywhere else than in that beastly place, they would not have been so cock-sure of it, with two Liberals going to the poll. Perhaps they are just a little *too* sure, on the whole."

"That is absurd, Arden," said Mr. Mallory severely. "A man should rely on his own powers, and not on what the party managers can do for him. You ought not to be up here at this moment, suing for testimonials from any statesman, however popular in those regions—you ought to be down there, on the field of action. You should deliver your credentials from the public platform."

"That is all very well," Mr. Arden rejoined; "and I am going down the moment my business will let me. But that brute Trotter, I understand, is going about saying he has a letter from Gladstone in his pocket, recommending his candidature. I consider it most unfair to a man who has spent so much—time about the seat as I have. I am sick of the very name of their infernal borough. I hate the whole thing. If I had thought there was going to be a contest, I should never have had anything to do with it."

"There you are wrong, Arden, permit me to say. A contest down there must be looked at from a national, as well as from a personal point of view. After all, you know, it will do good, if it brings out vividly the fussy impotence of the Tories—the Shareholders in Darkness."

"It will cost me a great deal of money," said Mr. Arden; "I know that."

"No doubt. But you will have the *certaminis gaudia.* What kind of a candidate, now, will this Lord Elvan make? Is he likely to prove a foeman worthy of your—ah—gold?"

"His claims to the seat," said Mr. Arden, "rest, I believe, upon the fact that he is one of the best judges of a horse in England. He is a turfite—what they call, in their abominable gambling jargon, a 'plunger.'"

"Ah—one of our lawgivers who, like the poet, are born, not made. Now, Arden, as to your mode of conducting the campaign. You start, let me tell you, with the advantage of an excellent Address. I question if so good an Address has ever yet been issued to a Scotch constituency."

"Very likely not," said Mr. Arden.

"You must follow up the lines of that Address in your speeches. Your first speech will be very important. You must devote it to a survey of the whole position, in a broad and statesmanlike style. You had better agree on all points with Gladstone—yes, I should certainly say, on all points—save one."

"I shall do nothing of the kind!"—cried Mr. Arden with sudden energy. "I dare not do it, Mallory—I dare not, I assure you! I must agree with Gladstone on all points—in everything."

"I do not think so," said Mr. Mallory. "If you differ from him, respectfully, on one point—it need not be a large matter—it will be more artistic. It will show your independence. It will add weight to your concurrence with him upon all other subjects."

"I dare not do it, Mallory. Such a thing would be fatal. I know these people better than you. They all swear by him. They all say the same thing of him. And they will all take their stand on what they have said."

"Their accent is probably broad enough," said Mr. Mallory.

"Of course it all seems simple enough up here," Mr. Arden went on, "but down there you meet men holding such inconsistent opinions about churches, and public-houses, and such things—it is terribly difficult to discover what will conciliate most of them. And I'm sure," he concluded fretfully, "I never studied anything harder."

"Theoretically, you know, Arden—theoretically, a candidate is not bound to reflect all the electors' prejudices. Theoretically, he is expected to mould, not merely to mirror, public opinion."

"If I," said Mr. Arden, "have correctly grasped the principle of the Caucus and the Closure, it is my duty, as a Delegate, to say whatever they want in the borough, and nothing whatever in the House."

"The crudity—the lack of earnestness in your way of putting things, Arden, are simply excruciating. However—as to your speech. In your speech, you had better not be too fluent."

"There will be no difficulty about *that,*" said Mr. Arden.

"It is a great thing to have confidence in one's powers," said Mr. Mallory. "You see, there is a curious fallacy which lurks in the vacuum known as the Philistine mind—namely, that a clumsy speaker is a shrewd and safe politician. Now, you must avoid any approach to the glibness of the worldling. Of course, you will be fluent at times; but that will be because you are carried away by a fiery wave of conviction—by your love of the working classes, and your hatred of the parasites of industry. It is indignation that makes you fluent—that must be clearly brought out."

"I shall think on the wines of my chief supporters," said Mr. Arden, "and that will make me indignant enough."

"You will gain fluency from the wine-cup—very well. Then, you had better give them plenty of figures. They like that. They associate that somehow with a reduction of taxation. And you should prove that Scotland receives too little out of the revenue."

"I have got that all right," said Mr. Arden.

"And you must attack Centralisation—the system under which the Red Tape-worm of officialism gnaws the vitals of the body-politic. Call London an octopus, or an ulcer—anything of that kind will do. Then you should throw out a sneer at the thing which is humorously known as the Upper House. The House of Commons, you might say, represents the Middle Classes; the House of Lords, the Middle Ages. In your peroration, you had better be solemn."

"I shall be solemn enough before then," said Mr. Arden.

"In your peroration," Mr. Mallory continued, "you should quote a verse from a Scottish song—something about brown heather, or thistles, or being 'leal,' whatever that is—I am unfamiliar myself with the pipings of the Doric reed. And I should interweave a Scriptural phrase or two. The pious peroration is in fashion just now."

"It seems to take," said Mr. Arden—"that line."

"Yes," mused the Editor; "it is strange how for so many the pill of Progress must be smothered in Pecksniffian treacle."

"No doubt. But it would scarcely do for me to say that in Shawkirk. What I'm specially perplexed about, Mallory, is Disestablishment. The leading man on my side is a Churchman. But then, you see, the Liberation Society will go for Trotter, if I don't attack the Church."

"You *must* attack the Church—an institution which gives birth to Ritualism is doomed. Formerly, it took nine tailors to make a man. Now, it takes one tailor to make a religion. Do you know, Arden, you might say that?"

"You forget—it is the Church of Scotland I'm concerned about."

"Ah—yes—of course. You couldn't try them with my scheme for Re-Establishment?"

"There's nothing about that in my Address, is there?"—asked Mr. Arden with sudden anxiety.

"No—we thought they might not be quite ripe for that, yet. But you might explain it, without committing yourself to it. It would at least be sowing the seed."

"I don't seem quite to remember what the scheme is," said Mr. Arden.

"The scheme is perfect in its simplicity. In each benefice of the Church as by law established, I, first of all, displace the present incumbent. In his stead I set an official chosen by competitive examination, whom I name the *Lector*. *Lector*, you will notice, has a soothing resemblance to the old word *Rector*. The *Lector* will deliver weekly addresses on political economy, the origin of species, sociology, and kindred subjects. He will likewise arrange for the delivery of lectures, in the buildings at present monopolised by the priesthood, by men of all shades of opinion, from the Agnostic down to the Calvinist."

"I don't think that is quite the kind of thing they want in Shawkirk," said Mr. Arden.

"*Tant pis pour* Shawkirk," said Mr. Mallory. "For thus, you see, the sting of Sectarianism is drawn, and a new development is given to the great principle of competitive examination. At the same time, we avoid the breaking up of a superb organisation transmitted to us from the Past. Remember this, Arden—you must always reverence the Past."

"As a Radical, now," said Mr. Arden languidly, "as a Radical, and Reformer, I thought I was allowed to reverence nothing before the passing of the Reform Bill?"

"Not at all. It is a shallow and a spurious Radicalism which flouts the labours of the Past—the Past whence *we* are sprung. And in dealing with old endowments, we must shun rash iconoclasm. The Candle that was lighted at Ridley's death will soon be extinguished in the Electric Light of Science. The problem is, how to retain the old organisation in the interests of the new truth. Only let us have science fitly endowed, and she will quickly silence the yelping of the sects!—And now, Arden, that I have dropped into your mind all the hints that occur to me at the moment, perhaps you will leave me to the composition of my leading article. I have to show myself to-night at Lady Primavere's, and my time is rather limited. I see"—he added, opening the door and looking into the sub-editors' room—"that your young friend has arrived."

"Perhaps you could spare him to me for an hour or two?"

"Oh, certainly," said the Editor; "certainly. Good-bye, Arden—take my advice, and you will be on the spot without delay. Primavere tells me that this man Trotter is likely to find support. You should not leave the field open to him a day longer than you can help."

Mr. Arden nodded a placid assent, and passed into the sub-editors' room. He greeted Lynn with affectionate cordiality.

"Take your hat," he said, "and come out with me for a minute. I want to speak to you—that was my reason for coming here."

When they came out into the street, Mr. Arden passed his arm under Lynn's with easy familiarity, and began to saunter slowly westward.

"Why have you not been to see us?"—he asked, in a tone of gentle reproach. "Did I not say that you were not to wait for formal invitations, and that kind of thing? We thought you must have forgotten the way to Hartington Gardens!"

Lynn felt a thrill of pleasure at Mr. Arden's use of the plural. But the question embarrassed him. He did not care to confess his true reason for avoiding Mr. Arden's house.

The truth was that a week on the *Forum* newspaper had left Lynn completely disenchanted. Sub-editing, he now feared, was a task for ever beyond his powers; and even had Mr. Mallory permitted him to attempt a leading article—of which there was obviously not the slightest chance—Lynn was obliged to acknowledge to himself that the faculty of skimming through a heap of ill-written telegrams at midnight, of detecting the salient points in the intelligence they contain, and producing thereon a lively and finished article before the paper goes to press—is neither a natural gift nor a trick to be swiftly acquired. Lynn felt that he was proving anything but a success on the *Forum*, and the sensation was not comfortable. The false position in which he stood towards Mr. Arden was exceedingly galling to him. He felt no inclination to go to Camilla, and inform her to whom he had told his brightest dreams that she must now regard her lover as a failure. He had consequently refrained from visiting Hartington Gardens, since the night of the dinner-party more than a week ago.

Mr. Arden observed the young man's confusion, and made a fairly good guess at its cause.

"You must atone for your neglect of us," he said, "by dining with us to-night—oh, it's all right about the paper! Mallory doesn't mind—I asked him. Besides, you can be back before eleven o'clock. I leave to-morrow morning for Shawkirk, and this is the last chance I shall have for some time of seeing you."

Lynn would fain have declined this invitation, tempting, in one respect, as it was. But Mr. Arden would listen to no refusal.

"We shall have a talk over the election," he said. "And besides, Mr. Lynn, I am going to ask you to do me a service."

"To do you a service?"—queried Lynn, wonderingly.

"Yes—a small matter of business. We can talk it over after dinner—five minutes' time will be enough. Here is a hansom. Jump in!—we shall be late as it is."

And so, almost before he realised what had come about, Lynn found himself being whirled off to Hartington Gardens.

On the way thither, Mr. Arden, who noticed his companion's depression, began to talk pleasantly about his work on the *Forum*. Lynn found it a relief to unbosom himself to such a sympathising listener. He made no attempt to conceal the fact that he had been painfully disillusioned as to journalism, and as to Mr. Mallory.

"When I hear him shouting in that office in the morning," he said, "I can hardly believe he is the man whose *Martyred Humanity* I used to study with such admiration. It's like the story of Mokannah —I've seen the Prophet without his Veil!"

"Oh, you mustn't compare Mallory to Mohammed," said Mr. Arden, whose range of study had not embraced *Lalla Rookh*— "he's not quite so bad as *that*, you know."

The greeting which Lynn received from Camilla was all that lover could desire. The little party of four at Mr. Arden's table that evening was infinitely more agreeable than the banquet which Mr. Mallory had adorned with his presence. Lynn forgot his cares, and grew animated—even evoking from Mr. Arden the mental observation that "the young fellow was by no means a fool after all—at least, not in some things."

After the ladies were gone, Mr. Arden deftly and airily introduced his 'small matter of business.' Nothing could have been more delicate, more flattering, more caressing, than his allusion to the 'service' which Lynn might do him—a 'service' he might have asked of anyone, of his own clerk—but which it would please him to think had been rendered by Arthur Lynn. The young man saw in this another proof of Mr. Arden's fine feeling—he wished to lighten the burden of obligation which Lynn might feel, by putting in his way the chance of making this small return. Lynn did not, in truth, give much thought to the matter. He had Mr. Arden's word that it was all right; and he wanted very much to be in the drawing-room. The transaction was speedily completed, to the mutual satisfaction of host and guest.

"You had better not say anything about this matter to anyone, Mr. Lynn—not even to my daughter"—said Mr. Arden as they went upstairs. "In any case, it's not worth mentioning—but my experience is that the less women hear about business the better."

Three facts stood forth in Lynn's retrospect of this happy evening, snatched from the dreary drudgery of the *Forum*. That he had heard for the first time of the Lone

Peak Silver Mine, Nevada. That he had subscribed his name to a printed form which he had not read. That Camilla was more beautiful than ever, and as kind.

CHAPTER XVII.

SUNDAY IN LONDON.

"Don't you ever go to church now, Arthur?" Camilla had asked her lover, in the course of a whispered confidence in Mr. Arden's drawing-room. "Now, *I* always go—to St. Stultitia's—not to matins, you know, because that is too early, but every Sunday forenoon. And Aunt Elizabeth *has* to go with me, though she hates poor Mr. Gargoyle, because he is so *high*."

Lynn did not fail to act on this hint, the following Sunday. He had promised to lunch on that day with Mr. Vaughan, between whom and himself something of a friendship had sprung up during their nights on the *Forum*. The morning he would devote to visiting Miss Arden's chosen shrine.

The Rev. Mr. Gargoyle, incumbent of St. Stultitia's, shared with another divine the distinction of having the 'highest' church in London. Nevertheless, the Rev. Mr. Gargoyle was a disappointed man. True, he had wrestled with the World, the Flesh, and the Bishop. But, though he had assiduously courted martyrdom for years, he had hitherto failed to win the coveted crown—a disappointment which was only partially made up to Mr. Gargoyle by the acquisition of a fashionable congregation.

The service at St. Stultitia's was attended principally by ladies. Nothing could have been more reverential than the manner of these fair pietists. Their eyes were never uplifted from their prayer-books, except to gaze on the meagre white-stoled form of Mr. Gargoyle. The male minority, as Lynn observed, was much less devout. They seemed absorbed, for the most part, in a study of those summer bonnets and the faces under them which made a sunshine in that shaded place. Lynn joined in this scrutiny, and was not long in singling out Camilla where she sat. He remarked with satisfaction the absence of the funereal head-gear affected by Mrs. Chevenix.

The service he beheld and listened to was as ‘high’ as Mr. Gargoyle could make it. Lynn could not help speculating upon what Mr. Ingleby would have thought and said, could he have known where his nephew was seated, that Sunday morning. To Mr. Ingleby —who regarded the introduction of organs into churches with abhorrence—St. Stultitia's, with the flowers and candles, the white-robed choristers, the music and tinted lights—would have been about as congenial as the Venusberg to St. Antony.

“I always walk home from church,” said Miss Arden, for whom Lynn waited—“when my aunt is not with me, and the weather is fine. She had a headache this morning, and could not face Mr. Gargoyle.”

“I suppose I ought to be very regretful.”

“Of course you ought. And now, Arthur, what do you propose to do?”

"I propose to walk with you, if you will allow me."

"Well, as a reward for your good behaviour in going to church, you may come—so far. Let us go through the Gardens—that is my favourite way."

"This reminds me of our Sundays in Leipsic, Camilla, when we walked round the promenades after the English service—and all the students and officers stared at you. You remember?"

"Yes," said Camilla; and for a time neither spoke. There was a feeling in the minds of both that the charm of those days had somehow slipped from them, and could never be conjured back again.

"I hadn't to go to a newspaper office at eight o'clock every night then," said Lynn at last, moodily, pursuing the train of his reflections.

"Oh, Arthur, you won't have to do that long!—I mean, you will soon make your way up, you know. But it is such a pity that your work should be so hard in the meantime!"

"Understand me, Camilla. I don't object to the work because it is hard. I would work like a slave to gain the end I have in view, and I would not complain. But I am not fit for the work—that is the thing which cuts me."

"Not fit for the work, Arthur!"

"Perhaps, if you knew all, you would say that the work is not fit for me. But I prefer to put it the other way. The man for my place would have to be a duller man than I, and at the same time far cleverer. I'm afraid that does not make the matter clear to you?"

"It does not. But I am very sorry to see that the *Forum* has disappointed you. Papa thought it would be such a good opening! I know that Mr. Mallory told him so."

"No doubt. But then Mr. Mallory's idea of a 'good opening' is something quite different from your father's—or from mine. You spoke a minute ago of my 'making my way up.' Of course, I still hope to do that. But I shall never do it as a sub-editor under Mr. Mallory."

"He is an odious man!" said Camilla. "After this, I shall detest him more than ever!"

"Oh, Mr. Mallory is not to blame. The fault is not his at all. He gives a certain rate of pay for a certain kind of work, and I know he could get it better done, for the same money, than it is by me. I shall therefore not take Mr. Mallory's money a day longer than I can help. What I shall do is to find out some other line of work for which I am suited, and throw myself into it heart and soul."

"Oh, Arthur, why should you do that?"

"Why?" repeated Lynn—"do you ask me, Camilla? You must know the reason as well as I do. Surely I do not need to tell you!"

There was a silence for some moments between them. Lynn felt himself puzzled, and perhaps a little vexed, by the seeming indifference with which Camilla had received his discouraging account of that 'opening' on the *Forum*, from which they had both expected such great things. The matter was one of vital moment to him, and therefore should have been to her. But she had not seemed so to regard it. When next she spoke it was to change the subject.

"Tell me, Arthur, have you heard of late from your friends in the North?"

"I had a letter only yesterday from Morton. He writes from Liverpool. He sails this week as first officer of the *Bidassoa*, and expects to be away for more than a year."

"Ah!—Your uncle, at least, will be pleased at that.—But have you heard nothing from your friends at Shawkirk?"

"My uncle has not cooled down enough to write me, as yet. But I have had letters, since I came here, from my aunt and from Gertrude."

"Then you correspond with Gertrude?"

"We have always written to each other," said Lynn.

"They must be very anxious on your account, of course."

"My aunt is. She begs me to take care of myself, and to go to church regularly—as I shall, after to-day. My uncle, it appears, groans whenever my name is mentioned."

"That must be very nice for them all. And Gertrude—what does she say?"

"Very little—except, by the way, that if I don't like my work on the *Forum*, I am to write to my uncle at once, and he will enable me, somehow, to dispense with it. Of course, that is out of the question. Gertrude is a generous girl, but she forgets that her father is not a millionaire. Nor, if he were, would I ask such a favour from him."

"Was that all that Gertrude said in her letter?"

"Yes, that was all. It was very kindly meant, I know, but—well, it struck me as being rather a juvenile kind of letter for my cousin to have written."

"Juvenile?"

"In this way. She knows as well as I do that I have not just now a penny in the world. And yet she seems to assume that I would not hesitate to throw up the post your father was so good as get for me—in other words, to take money from my uncle. I suppose she must have been thinking of the Bar. But my uncle would not hear of that; and, in any case, I have no intention of living on his bounty. Gertrude might certainly have known that."

Camilla said nothing; and Lynn, glancing at her face, saw on it a look of distress and alarm which he could not understand. Her manner perplexed him more and more. He had expected from her some word of sympathy and encouragement. But she had spoken no such word; had said nothing to indicate that she took any special interest in his plans for the future. And now, she had relapsed once more into silence.—In reality, the thought that filled the girl's mind was this—and she repeated the words once or twice under her breath—"*Gertrude knows.*"

As they walked through the bright, sunshiny Gardens, along the paths patterned by the dancing leaves, Lynn felt the cold shadow of a coming change stealing over him. It was always so with them. They set forth laughing and loving: then something was said, by mere chance apparently, that seemed to place them miles apart. Lynn could think of only one thing as the cause of it; and his doubts returned upon him with added bitterness.

Suddenly Camilla laid her hand on his arm. He could have sworn that at that moment she shivered as if with cold.

"Arthur," she said, speaking eagerly and hurriedly, "will you listen to me? I have something—something to tell you."

"Something to tell me?"

"Yes—something that should have been told you long ago. Arthur, I have deceived you. I must—"

At that moment a gentleman rose from a seat, and came towards them—a tall gentleman, accurately dressed—Mr. Dulcimer. He smiled sweetly as he advanced, though the instant before he had been scowling in a way that would scarcely have discredited Lara. Lynn remembered Camilla's remark about her favourite way lying through the Gardens.

He was not disposed to consider it an accident that Mr. Dulcimer should be found sitting at that particular hour, on that particular bench. Camilla's abrupt speech, broken off on Mr. Dulcimer's appearance—her manifest agitation—had taken him completely by surprise. He connected them now with Mr. Dulcimer; and walked on in silence, consumed with the fires of jealousy.

His anger was increased by Miss Arden's manner towards the poet. She had greeted him at first with a curious blending of impatience and relief, and now she seemed actually to find pleasure in his drivelling compliments, and to encourage his fatuous talk! At no time was Mr. Dulcimer's society agreeable to Lynn; but in his present mood it almost maddened him. They walked on through the Gardens, Mr. Dulcimer discoursing eloquently the while on the subject of his Sylvan Reunion, and Camilla listening with apparent interest. At last Lynn's patience was exhausted. He took out his watch, and muttered something about an engagement.

Camilla held out her hand to him. "You will come soon—to see us?" she said.

"I don't know," Lynn answered, hurriedly. "I have my work—my time is not my own."

"True!" murmured Mr. Dulcimer sympathisingly—"true!"

Lynn turned sharp round on the poet, and gave him one contemptuous look. Then he raised his hat, and left them.

He went on his way in a mood of angry bewilderment. What was he to make of Camilla?—of her fluctuations between frank affection and chill reserve? What had she meant by saying that she had 'deceived' him?—that there was something being kept from him which he ought to know? Hitherto his own poverty had seemed to him the only bar between them. There must, it now appeared, be something else; and Lynn could think only of Mr. Dulcimer. He did think of that gentleman, with mingled fury and scorn, all the way to Mr. Vaughan's.

"You seem out of sorts, Lynn," said Mr. Vaughan, whom he found smoking and drinking brandy and soda-water in company with Sugden.—"How have you spent the morning hours? In your own society?"

"No," said Lynn; "I have been to church. Perhaps that may account for it."

"To church!" said Vaughan. "Well, well! Young men will be young men! I too have heard the chimes at mid-day. We *will* do wild reckless things, when all the world is young, lad, and all the leaves are green! But don't do it again. Depend upon it, sir, the steady, sober, slow-going way is the best in the long-run. Ask Sugden—he will tell you the same!"

Mr. Sugden set down his glass.

"It's the bells," he said with gravity. "When you know him a little better, Lynn, you'll find he's always like this on Sundays. He thinks they're his maiden aunt's wedding-bells, you know, and that she'll cut off his allowance, when she's married. Humour him, Lynn, humour him. The Chief thinks we shall not have him long."

During lunch and after it, Mr. Vaughan

drank freely, and became even more voluble than was his wont. By-and-bye he and Sugden fell to discussing, with the utmost candour, the working and the tone of the *Forum* newspaper; from that they diverged into general journalistic talk. At another time, Lynn would have listened eagerly to such conversation. But to-day he was moody and pre-occupied. His thoughts went back over his forenoon with Camilla, which had begun so brightly and ended so badly. In seeking, vainly, for a clue to her altered demeanour, he became for the time unmindful of his companions.

Two words, let fall by Vaughan, suddenly arrested his notice, and drew him from his reverie. They were the words "Lone Peak."

"And to think," Vaughan was saying, "that, after all, I had to write the fellow's election address! Mallory made such a point of it, I did not see how to refuse, though I'd rather have written his last speech to the hangman. I dropped on it, Sugden, just £450—the savings of honest industry!"

"You might have known better," observed Sugden.

"So might five hundred other people," rejoined Vaughan, "and Mallory among them. The Chief held two hundred shares."

"The Chief doesn't often put his pile on the wrong thing."

"Well, he did that time, anyhow. And to think I've set that fellow on the way to tagging M.P. after his name! He can't lose the seat, after an address like the one I wrote for him—all about Retrenchment, and the other party whoops. Confound him, he's forced me to retrench!" And Mr. Vaughan solaced himself with a prolonged draught of brandy and soda-water.

"Is that the Lone Peak Silver Mine you're talking of?" asked Lynn, who had not lost a word of this conversation.

"It is," said Vaughan; "and I wish I had never heard its name!"

"But is it not a—well, I mean, is it not all right? Sound, you know, and so forth?"

"Sound!" repeated Mr. Vaughan expressively. "My dear fellow, you don't read the City articles, else you would not ask that question."

"It's a mere bubble," said Sugden.

"Blown from peculiarly dirty water," said Vaughan. "Like most American mines, it has simply been a big hole to throw English money into. That man Arden—you may have seen him about the office—was at the bottom of it. By Jove, I wish he were, literally!"

"But it's going on still, is it not?" asked Lynn, now seriously disquieted.

"Oh, yes, it's going on—and will go on perennially, I suppose, so long as a fool is left with money to chuck away. Why, only yesterday I got a new prospectus—the usual tissue of lies—shafts, galleries, smelters, assays, all the old jargon re-hashed in the old style. Here is the precious document, I believe."

Mr. Vaughan, who evidently felt his wrongs acutely and liked to dilate on them, took from a table near him a mining prospectus, with another document folded within it.

"This," he went on, holding up the latter, "is an invitation to all the people who have lost their money already to show their wisdom by coming and losing more!"

Lynn glanced at the paper. He fancied he had seen it before.

"May I look at it?" he said.

"Oh, certainly. But don't be tempted. It's very alluring, on paper, I know that."

One glance at the document showed Lynn that he *had* seen it before. It was headed FORM OF APPLICATION FOR SHARES. TO THE DIRECTORS OF THE LONE PEAK SILVER MINING COMPANY (LIMITED)—and proceeded thus:—"Gentlemen, having paid to you the sum of ....Pounds, being £2 per Share, I hereby request that you will allot me.........Shares of £10 each in the Lone Peak Silver Mining Company (Limited), and I hereby agree to accept such Shares or any smaller number that you may allot to me, and to pay the further sum of £3 per Share on allotment, and the balance of £5 per Share two months after allotment; and I authorise you to place my name upon the Register of Shareholders for Shares so allotted. I am, Gentlemen, Your obedient Servant"—and then followed certain dotted lines, over each of which Lynn remembered having written his signature, his name in full, his residence, his profession, and the date.

Lynn read and re-read the form of application carefully. He had not done so before, while 'going through the formality' of putting his name to it at Mr. Arden's dinner-table. He had thought only of doing a service to one who had shown much kindness to him. He had felt grateful for the opportunity which Mr. Arden, with so much tact and delicacy, had put in his way. He had never for a moment suspected Mr. Arden's honour and probity. Vaughan and Sugden knew nothing of his intimacy with the stockbroker. Their conversation showed him, at least, that all men did not repose that perfect confidence in Mr. Arden which he had done. It was an unpleasant revelation.

Lynn did not seek any further enlightenment from Vaughan and Sugden on the subject of the Lone Peak mine. His reflections, after parting with them, were of the most disagreeable kind. He knew nothing, save in the vaguest and most theoretical way, about stocks and men's dealings in them. But he had some notion of what was meant by a bubble company and a bogus stockholder. There were but two opinions he could hold about Mr. Arden—either that he was among the most generous and high-principled of men, or else that he was an accomplished humbug. After the talk in Vaughan's rooms, it came for the first time into his mind that gratitude to his (Lynn's) father, and an unselfish desire to make two lovers happy, did not exhaust the possible motives for Mr. Arden's extreme complaisance.

That evening, before going down to the office, Lynn sat in his room, up three pair of stairs in Southampton Row, trying to read—in reality, thinking over these and other things. His utter ignorance of all that is comprehended under the term 'business' made him feel utterly helpless, in face of his present difficulty. The transaction to which Mr. Arden had committed him might be explained in some excessively simple way; that was possible. But it might also be put in a very ugly light. It might be said that he had been used by Mr. Arden as a 'man of straw.'

He was now amazed at his own imprudence in doing so lightly what he had done. And yet—he had had such absolute confidence in the man! He had believed him so implicitly when he declared the signing of the printed form a 'mere formality!' And to him Mr. Arden had been, above all things, Camilla's father.

Lynn felt the need of an adviser, sorely. He might, in his present mood, have gone straight to Mr. Arden; but Mr. Arden was now down at Shawkirk, electioneering. The one person to whom he had always gone for advice on matters connected with 'business' was his uncle, Mr. Ingleby. Acting partly on impulse, partly spurred on by his feeling of extreme mental discomfort, Lynn sat down and wrote to Mr. Ingleby a letter, in which, without mentioning Mr. Arden's name, he explained what he had done, and asked his uncle's opinion and advice.

Having finished his letter, Lynn began to debate within himself whether or not he should send it. His uncle would certainly think him a most egregious fool — well, he thought that already, so far as 'business' was concerned. Again it seemed to him, now that the whole thing was set forth in black and white, that he was making much ado about nothing. Then Vaughan's remarks came to his mind, and he felt less sure about that. On the whole, however, he was disposed to keep the letter back for a day or two. That would give him time to ponder the affair, and perhaps to glean some further information.

Thus minded, Lynn set out at his usual hour for the *Forum* office. He had to wait in Holborn for a 'bus to take him down to the Strand; and it chanced that his place of waiting was directly opposite the West Central post-office. Acting on another impulse, he crossed the street, and posted his letter to Mr. Ingleby.

He was nearing the office of the *Forum*, when suddenly Camilla's words that day started up before his mind—"Arthur, I have deceived you!"—Could there be a connection between these words and the friendly service which Mr. Arden had asked at his hands? Lynn's blood ran cold at the thought—next moment, he had dismissed it. And before long he had been obliged to forget all his troubles, while elaborating, from the material afforded by the 'flimsies,' a summary of the speeches delivered at a great meeting held in the Midlands with the view of raising the puddler to his true position in the social scale.

CHAPTER XVIII.

TAKEN TO TASK.

Mr. Arden arrived at Shawkirk—to 'open the campaign,' as his supporters said—in a temper the reverse of pleasant. To begin with, he had had, on the morning of his departure from London, a most unsatisfactory conversation with his daughter. He had only meant to give Camilla a few hints as to her behaviour towards Arthur Lynn during his absence, and the girl had 'flared up'—so Mr. Arden expressed it—in the most unaccountable way. She had even dropped a word which showed that she suspected him of not holding to his part of their bargain; and credited him with the intention of inveigling Lynn into some of his financial projects. Mr. Arden was irritated by his daughter's 'unfilial obstinacy'; bored with the hot and dusty day-journey down to Scotland; disgusted with the prospect that lay before him—the speeches, the committee-meetings, the canvassing—the courtesies he must exchange, the dinners he must eat, the money he must spend. It consequently required a considerable effort on Mr. Arden's part to respond with fitting cordiality to the greetings given him by Mr. Turpie and other members of his committee, whom he found waiting his arrival on the platform of the Shawkirk station.

In Mr. Turpie's carriage, and accompanied by that gentleman and by Mr. Hislop, his agent, the candidate was driven in state to the Cross Keys Hotel, which was to be his headquarters during the contest. Mr. Turpie—whom Mr. Arden privately hated, as a bore of the first water—would cheerfully have sat up all night, talking over the state of affairs. Mr. Arden got rid of him for the time on the plea of fatigue, after fixing the hour when he should address his Committee on the morrow. When Turpie was gone, Mr. Arden proceeded to make himself comfortable. Taught by previous experience, he had brought down with him his own wine and cigars. He now ordered a bottle of Heidseck, lit a Havanna, gave another to Mr. Hislop, and set himself to have a confidential talk with the lawyer.

"Well, Hislop," Mr. Arden began, "this is a devil of a mess you've got me into, down here."

"The contest, you mean?"

"Of course I do. If I had thought there was to be a contested election, my face would never have been seen here, I can assure you. You must have managed infernally badly."

"I don't see it. We got you chosen by the Committee. That's the strong point in your favour, Mr. Arden, and I have no doubt about the result, unless the unexpected happens. But you will have to show fight, you know."

"Of course I shall, now that I am in for it. But it's going to be very expensive."

"Certainly," assented Mr. Hislop.

"And very troublesome. That brute Trotter seems to have found supporters."

"Only among the hands and the small shop-keepers. Not a single master has taken his side, and I don't expect any will, either, as long as the Bailie proposes to amend the Factory Act in the workmen's interest. Sanderson—you remember Sanderson, the coal-merchant who insisted on shaking hands with you, last time you were down?—is his main prop. Then there's Tennant, the slater. You remember him?"

Mr. Arden groaned.

"These, and some more of the same kidney, are the men Trotter has on his committee. Then there's the E.U. minister, and the Baptist minister, and Smail of the *Warden*. They're going about calling you an Episcopalian. You'll have to contradict that."

"Oh, certainly," said Mr. Arden. "As long as they only ask me what I'm *not*, I don't mind."

"They can make a lot of noise," said Mr. Hislop, "but that's all. They've no real influence behind them, as we have."

"Then what did you mean by saying in

your last telegram that the other side was looking dangerous?"

"Oh, that's another thing altogether. I thought Sanderson was up to some dirty trick or other, and I must say I think so still. That fellow wants looking after. He's as 'cute as any electioneering agent could be. What do you think he did the other day? Brought out a caricature of his own candidate!"

"Really?"

"Yes—as if it came from us, you know. There was a picture of a fellow with a salmon in one hand and a 'cleek' in the other, and a water-bailiff collaring him. The fellow with the 'cleek' was an exact portrait of Trotter, and the bailiff had a certain resemblance to—you!"

"By way of representing my supposed views on the Game Laws?"

"Precisely. That caricature was a clever move—it gained a certain amount of popular sympathy for Trotter. You see, they are all poachers here—Trotter himself was a notorious one, as a young man. That's where his real strength lies—he's what they call a 'Shawkirk chiel,' born and bred, and he makes the most of it. By the way, have you brought that letter?"

"No," said Mr. Arden curtly.

"That's a pity. To hear the other side, you'd think they'd got a holograph letter from Gladstone, commending Trotter to the constituency. In reality, I'm told it's only a post-card with ten words on it, about some Local Option resolution that Trotter had sent up to him. But properly worked, it does very well."

"What line are they taking on the drink question?"

"Trotter says as little about it as he can. He's cunning enough to hold his tongue, when speaking out would damage his chance. But *there* you have him. He's identified with Teetotalism, and that will not go down here. They don't want Local Option in Shawkirk."

"And about the Church?"

"Say you'll do whatever the majority want, and bring in Hartington. You can't do better. The Bailie would have it pulled down, right away, but you mustn't go so far as that. You will have to be guarded, you know. Turpie is an elder in the Parish Church, and there's a number of Liberal Churchmen it won't do to offend. But I'll post you up in these things before your speech comes off. Your first big meeting won't be till after the nomination. I've engaged the Corn Exchange—same place Gladstone spoke in."

"By the way," remarked Mr. Arden, as Hislop rose to go, "I don't think you've said anything about the Tories, and the man they're running?"

"Oh, the Tories?—my dear sir, you don't need to trouble yourself about *them.* The people here look upon it quite as a joke. Macritchie likes to make a fuss, and Lord Leaderdale hates Primavere—that's the explanation of the whole thing. Lord Elvan is popular enough here, in his way, but politics aren't his way, you see. I'm told he couldn't make a speech to save his life. Haig is coaching him night and day, but I hear he makes uncommon little of it. They're afraid to face a public meeting. No doubt they will get votes at Bowick, where two-thirds of the people are the Earl's tenants. But that won't give them even a respectable minority, you'll find. As I told you before, Mr. Arden, the candidate that carries Shawkirk carries the seat. It is here you'll have to put your best foot foremost."

"I know," said Mr. Arden, suppressing a yawn.

"Here is a list of names"—continued Mr. Hislop, producing a closely-written sheet of foolscap from his breast-pocket—"of people you will have to call on. Trotter—"

"Put the d—d thing out of my sight!"—cried Mr. Arden with sudden vehemence. "I mean"—he added hastily, noticing the look of astonishment which this outburst of emotion called forth on his agent's face—"hand it over, and I'll look at it to-morrow.

I'm too fagged for this kind of thing to-night."

"Very well," said the lawyer. "Trotter, I was going to observe, has had three days' start of you, Mr. Arden, and you'll have to make up for lost time. These are all names of people who won't promise you their votes unless you go and ask them yourself. You should begin to-morrow, and make a regular round."

"All right," said Mr. Arden, sinking back into his chair as the lawyer left the room. There were, he knew, eleven days of this kind of thing before him, for the writ had now been issued and the polling-day was fixed. He knew precisely the nature and amount of the evil which the morrow, and each succeeding day, was bringing with it. On the morrow he must dine with Turpie—an ordeal to which Mr. Arden looked forward with dread—do a lot of canvassing, and address his committee. The following day must be spent in canvassing and speech-making in another of the boroughs.

On the day after that there were the nomination, another dinner, more canvassing and more oratory. Then came the great meeting in the Corn Exchange. The prospect of making a speech did not grievously oppress Mr. Arden, who had the faculty of keeping cool on a public platform, and of always finding something to say. But after the speech would come the 'heckling'; and what that meant, he knew by experience.

"I question if it's worth all this purgatory," he said to himself, tossing the end of his last cigar into the grate. "And yet, I don't know." And there rose up before Mr. Arden's mind's eye a pleasing vision of his name, with the two magical letters after it, as it would appear on the Lone Peak and other prospectuses. "Yes," he said, "it *is* worth it—it's the most serviceable *cachet* in the world."

Mr. Arden had to fall back on this reflection many times during the two days which followed, else he would have given up the conflict in sheer disgust. His throat was dry and his voice hoarse with much speaking; his wrist was stiff with many handclasps; Mr. Turpie's wine had given him a headache, as he knew it would. He had been on the whole well received, and his partisans expressed themselves sanguine of success. But this could not make him forget the sufferings of the moment. Once, in the Shawkirk market-place, Mr. Arden chanced to meet Bailie Trotter, red-faced and perspiring, waving his arms and talking in a shout to his henchmen who were with him. The rival candidates bowed stiffly to each other; their respective suites exchanged glances of scorn and defiance. "That's the very man for the brutes!"—thought Mr. Arden, as he contemplated his opponent. "The fellow seems positively to like it!"—and indeed the Bailie's loud harsh laugh, heard all over the square, seemed to tell that he joyed in the work of electioneering.

The eve of the nomination day found Mr. Arden in his private room at the Cross Keys Hotel, alone. He had dined well—at least, fairly well. On the table by his side were a bottle of wine, a box of choice cigars, the London newspapers, and a heap of letters and telegrams. Mr. Arden was lazily opening these last, and glancing over their contents. This was Mr. Arden's way of enjoying the only respite he had from the misery of his present existence as a candidate. When his series of public meetings began, even those placid evening hours would be lost to him.

Mr. Hislop was announced, and entered so close on the waiter's heels, that he might almost have overheard his client's fervent "Confound it!" The lawyer's face was unusually solemn.

"Good Heavens, Hislop," cried Mr. Arden fretfully, "what is it now? You don't mean to say you want me to go out and do something, at this time of night, after dinner?"

"Oh no, you don't need to come out. I want to have a few minutes' talk with you."

"About something disagreeable, of course?"

"Well, not exactly pleasant. You haven't seen this afternoon's *Warden?* No? Then I can't do better than let you read the article for yourself"—and Mr. Hislop handed to his client a copy of the local journal, with the leading article marked.

Arden read the article through, using strong language at intervals under his breath. It was a personal attack on himself, clumsily put together, hideously written, and grotesque in its laboured innuendoes. The allusions to ambitious financiers who seek to enter Parliament for gain—to London carpet-baggers who woo Scottish constituencies, and, having won them, are seen of them no more—the contrast drawn between the broad-minded Trotter, with his rich political lore and his deep disinterested love for the working-man, and the shallow, selfish worldling, the unsympathetic stranger, Arden—were just what might have been expected, neither better nor worse. The sting of the article lay in the double insinuation with which it closed. There was a reference to the Lone Peak silver mine, and a touch of pathos about the ruin it had brought on the widow and the orphan. There was further a retrospective glance over Mr. Arden's personal history, his early connection with Shawkirk; and a hint, not very delicately conveyed, that his proceedings had contributed to the misfortunes of "our noble-minded and philanthropic fellow-townsman, the late lamented Mr. Lynn."

"This is infamous, atrocious!"—exclaimed Mr. Arden in high wrath, as he reached the end of the leading article. "Why, it's a libel—it's a gross, offensive libel! Have you any notion, Hislop, who the infernal scoundrel is that wrote it?"

"Oh yes—it's Smail himself. I know his style."

"I shall certainly prosecute the ruffian—I shall have him indicted for libel! Did you ever see anything more slanderous in print?—more mendacious and more—abominable? It's a parcel of rascally lies, and the villain deserves a thorough good horse-whipping!"

"I should not advise you to take the law into your own hands"—said Mr. Hislop drily;

"nor perhaps, for that matter, to put it in motion at all. But that you can think over, and decide on deliberately. What I want to speak to you about is the use this fellow makes of the name of the late Mr. Lynn. The fact is, Mr. Arden—you don't mind my speaking plainly, I hope?"

"Not at all. Come to the point."

"Well, the fact is there have been some ugly reports floating about here recently in connection with your—services to the late Mr. Lynn. The very men who fleeced him and laughed at him, when he was alive, are quite ready, of course, to make him out a martyr, now that he is dead. The masters got the better of the hands, in a row they had last year about wages, and since then they've been regretting Lynn all the more. Of course, you and I know that he ruined himself for a fad, but the hands don't see it in that light. This article only puts in Smail's English what a lot of these fellows have been saying to each other for weeks back. You'll have to counteract this attempt to damage us."

"How?"

"By your speech in the Corn Exchange. Naturally, you'll have a reference to your early life in Shawkirk—you'll have to come the local strong, you know—and there you can bring in something neat about Lynn and his philanthropic craze—the help you gave him in working out the scheme—the opposition it met with from narrow-minded capitalists, which was the true cause of its failure—and so on, and so on. I don't need to tell *you* what to say."

"No," said Mr. Arden reflectively; "I see what you mean. You did quite right, Hislop, in telling me of these disgraceful slanders. And as to the speech, you are right there also. That is what I shall do."

"I thought it my duty, as your agent, to let you know what was being said."

"Certainly," said Mr. Arden, "certainly. Quite right. And as for the blackguard who—"

Mr. Arden's threat of vengeance was interrupted by a knock at the door. The waiter announced that Mr. Ingleby was below in the commercial room, and wished to have five minutes' conversation with Mr. Arden.

"Say to Mr. Ingleby that Mr. Arden will see him directly"—said Hislop to the waiter; and then to Arden, as the man closed the door:—"Excuse my officiousness, but this is a great chance, and I don't want you to lose it. I am not saying too much when I say that Ingleby's support would make the seat yours to a certainty. He has great influence here, especially among the Dissenters—"

"But I thought he had promised me his support?"

"Well, no—so far, I should say, he has been standing neutral. He and Turpie are sworn foes, you know, and that may have kept him from joining your committee. But his calling on you now looks as if he were going to sink all that. Humour him, Mr. Arden—for Heaven's sake, humour him! Remember, it is very important, especially after this article in the *Warden*. If the people see Ingleby taking your side, they'll know what to think of all these stories."

"All right," said Mr. Arden. "Leave him to me. My acquaintance with Mr. Ingleby didn't begin yesterday. I know which way to stroke him down."

"I hope you do," rejoined the lawyer, "for really, as I said before, it's most important to make sure of Ingleby. That's the one thing —but we must not keep him waiting. He hates that. Good-night, sir, good-night—yes, keep that copy of the *Warden;* and *do* humour Ingleby—he wants a deal of humouring, you know—"

"Oh, it's all right. Tell the man to show him up."

Mr. Ingleby paused on the threshold of the room, and his face wore an expression that did not suggest a friendly visit. He hated tobacco-smoke, and the aroma of Mr. Arden's cigar was strong. Mr. Arden himself, seen through the thin bluish haze, in a loose velvet coat, his white fingers sparkling with rings, a cigar between his teeth and a champagne bottle at his elbow—was not an object likely to please Mr. Ingleby's eye.

Mr. Arden got up from his easy-chair.

"Charmed to see you, Ingleby," he said. "So kind of you to look me up. I had intended calling on you before this, but my time is not my own here, you know—that confounded fellow Hislop seems to have taken possession of me, body and soul. Won't you take a seat?"

"Thank you," said Mr. Ingleby, frigidly; "as what I have to say to you, Mr. Arden, will of necessity occupy some time, I will, with your permission, take a chair." And Mr. Ingleby, selecting the hardest and straightest-backed chair in the room, sat down, grasping his hat in one hand and his umbrella in the other. "You won't have a cigar?"—said Mr. Arden.

"Thank you. I do not smoke," said Mr. Ingleby.

"Or a glass of wine?"

"Thank you. I do not drink," said Mr. Ingleby. Then there was a pause. "The man means to have a row," said Mr. Arden to himself; and indeed Mr. Ingleby's look, his tone of voice, his attitude as he sate bolt upright on his chair, seemed quite to warrant the inference.

"Trade brisk just now?"—said Mr. Arden at length, breaking the silence. "I should think you will be glad when this election uproar gets quieted down. By the way, Ingleby, I was disappointed at not seeing your name on my committee-list. After the talk we had in London, last year, I fully expected to have your support. Hislop tells me—"

"My purpose, sir, in coming here, was not to discuss your election prospects"—said Mr. Ingleby.

"Then what *was* your purpose? Be good enough to come to the point."

"I shall endeavour to do so. I can assure you, sir, that duty, and not inclination, has made me trouble your—leisure to-night."

"That's frank, anyhow," said Mr. Arden with a laugh.

"A duty disagreeable to myself," continued Mr. Ingleby, "but from which I shall not shrink. On the occasion of your last visit to

Shawkirk, you induced my nephew to leave this place for London—contrary to my wish, and in direct opposition to the plans I had formed for his future."

"I beg your pardon. I 'induced' your nephew to do nothing of the sort. He was, strange to say, dissatisfied with the highly honourable and lucrative post you had secured for him. He asked me to assist him, and I did so. That is all, so far as I am aware."

"No, sir," said Mr. Ingleby, repressing his indignation by an obvious effort—"that is *not* all, permit me to say. You encouraged my nephew, for purposes of your own, to set at naught the wishes of his nearest relative, and his—trustee."

"You puzzle me," said Mr. Arden. "I know that you were appointed a trustee under the father's will. But the young man is of age. Your interest in his affairs must now, I should think, be purely sentimental—not legal."

"You know better than that, sir," said Mr. Ingleby; "you do not deceive me by this show of ignorance. My suspicions, I confess, were aroused when you enticed my nephew to London — out of 'gratitude' to my late brother-in-law. I am now as certain of the facts as I can be of anything."

"What facts?"

"That you were acquainted with the late Mr. Hume—that you met him after his—his return to this country."

"Hume? Certainly I met him—several times. What then?"

"And that you have all along been cognisant of the disposition which Mr. Hume made of his fortune. I say that you have known it all along, sir! You have taken advantage of my nephew's simplicity, his inexperience, to throw him among the men who write for that godless newspaper, to keep him hanging about your house—for an end which I need not particularise. You have traded on your own knowledge of his true position, and his ignorance of it."

"My dear sir," said Mr. Arden, with unruffled composure, "you are unreasonable—you do me something less than justice. I don't, of course, admit that there is any truth in your random assertions. But in any case, was it *my* part to tell the young man about his windfall? *I* am not his relative—nor his trustee. If it suited you to keep him in the dark, was it my business to interfere?"

"I do not need to care for that insinuation," said Mr. Ingleby, "nor to repel it. What I have done has been done in the exercise of that discretion vested in me by Mr. Hume, when drawing up his will—and also, I can honestly say, with a single eye to my nephew's true interests."

"You might find it troublesome to make other people believe that, you know."

"I do not care for the opinion of other people. I have the approbation of my own conscience in what I have done."

"Oh, don't let us have any talk about conscience, if you please. We all know what *that* means. It seems to me, Mr. Ingleby, that we can do no good by continuing this conversation. You evidently do not understand—"

"I understand perfectly, sir—indeed, too well. And I have no doubt, sir, that the young lady your daughter understands too. In such matters, if I may express my opinion, I should say she is by no means wanting in discernment."

"You may say what you please," rejoined Mr. Arden, placidly. "As Mr. Lynn's relative—and trustee—you have a right to know that he has asked my permission to pay his addresses to my daughter, and that I have given it. I can understand your disappointment. It is most natural. I do not doubt that you had other views—of course, with a single eye to your nephew's interests!"

Mr. Ingleby, in his trouble of mind, scarcely noticed the taunt which Mr. Arden's words conveyed. He had no doubt that the man was speaking truly—that his nefarious scheme had succeeded, and that this unfortunate young man had been taken in the toils. In justice to Mr. Ingleby it must be said that at that moment he did not think of Arthur Lynn as a possible husband lost to his own daughter—but as his nephew and ward, to whom, mated with such an one as Camilla Arden, life would never again appear as a serious and solemn thing.

"That is a matter," said Mr. Ingleby at last, rising from his chair as he spoke—"which, I opine, need not be discussed between us. My nephew will, of course, choose for himself—"

"Of course he will," said Mr. Arden cheerfully.

"—Though not until I shall have enlightened him as to certain points of which, as yet, he has no suspicion. But there is another matter to which I must make reference. The pecuniary interests of this young man, at all events, are still under my charge. I shall continue to protect them so far as it is in my power, against all mercenary schemes whatsoever. It shall be my endeavour to save this young man from the dangers to which his ignorance of money matters may expose him."

"Very proper, I'm sure," said Mr. Arden.

"That, sir, is sheer effrontery on your part, permit me to—"

"Have a care, sir!"—said Arden angrily;

"do not go too far. I have listened to your balderdash long enough already."

"You will have to listen a little longer, sir, whether you will or not. I shall not go"—Mr. Arden also had now risen from his chair, and laid his hand on the bell-pull—"I say I shall not go, until I have said what I came here to say. I have heard about your precious plan—the 'mere formality' you persuaded my nephew to go through. You may have thrown dust in his eyes, but you cannot in mine."

"So the young man has been writing to you about our little transaction?"—said Arden, inwardly cursing this turn of affairs, but showing no outward sign of discomposure. "If so, he has put you up to a good thing."

"He *has* written to me, sir," said Mr. Ingleby, "and with an anxiety to know the possible consequences of his imprudence which I can very well understand. You are yourself, I am informed, a director of this concern, and no one can know better than yourself what is its true character."

"That is so," said Mr. Arden.

"It is a Yankee swindle," continued Mr. Ingleby, "floated on lies—a second Emma mine—an undertaking that will pay the promoters, and ruin every other individual that has to do with it!"

"Oh, this is too much!"—cried Mr. Arden with genuine indignation. "You are talking arrant nonsense, sir, and you ought to know it!"—It was characteristic of Mr. Arden that while he had listened unmoved to Mr. Ingleby's unflattering allusions to his daughter, he was instantly roused by these aspersions on his favourite mine.—"Your nephew, by my advice, has taken shares in what will be the most profitable enterprise of the century. From what I know of him, I am sure that he will meet his engagements. And I am equally sure that he will not regret having done so."

"We shall see," said Mr. Ingleby wrathfully. "What action may yet be taken in the matter, I do not know; but action *shall* be taken—that I promise you. You can judge for yourself what construction will be put on your conduct, when it is represented in its true colours. I shall make it my business to do so, and that at the earliest possible moment."

"As you please," said Mr. Arden, with affected indifference. "And now, perhaps, you will have the goodness to—"

"I am going, sir," said Mr. Ingleby sternly. "I shall not trouble you by expressing to you any opinion on your proceedings. But I shall do so to others, freely."

"You had better keep yourself beyond reach of the law."

"I shall endeavour to do so, I hope successfully. I might, in return give you the same advice. And, sir, if I possess any influence in this borough—and I do not say that my influence is altogether without weight—I give you notice it shall be used against you in the present contest. I shall certainly do my utmost to prevent the return for a Scottish constituency of one who—"

"Do it!"—cried Mr. Arden in a fury, tugging violently at the bell-rope—"do it and be d—d!"

Mr. Ingleby stood for a moment, as if petrified by this awful imprecation. He raised his hands to the ceiling—with his hat still clutched in one, and his umbrella in the other—in the attitude of a Hebrew prophet invoking celestial fire. Then, without another word, he fled from that atmosphere of profanity and cigars.

The Town Hall clock was striking ten, as Mr. Ingleby left the Cross Keys Hotel. A walk of fifteen minutes would have taken him home, yet it was not until after midnight that he appeared in the bosom of his family—an irregularity without precedent in the annals of the Ingleby household.

Supper was laid as usual on the parlour table, and beside the plates were certain Bibles and psalm-books, ready for family worship. As the time passed on, and still Mr. Ingleby did not return, his wife became very anxious on his account, ever and again laying down her knitting-needles, to ask some question of her daughters.

"Where do you think he can have gone,

girls?"—she said for the twentieth time; "he never stayed out so late at night before! Oh, dear, I hope nothing has happened to him! Where do you think he can be?"

"You had better ask Gertrude, mamma," said Caroline at last—"she is the one most likely to know. Wasn't there a letter from Arthur to-day, Gertrude?"

"Don't fret yourself, mamma," said Gertrude, ignoring this last sally; "father will be here presently. He will tell you all about it himself."

"Oh, dear!" said Mrs. Ingleby; "I hope there is nothing wrong about Arthur again! —What do you think can be the matter, Gertrude?"

"I don't know, mamma, any more than you. Let us have patience until father comes."

Mr. Ingleby had not shown his daughter Lynn's letter, nor acquainted her with its contents. But he had let her see that these were of a satisfactory nature. Indeed, they had seemed to inspire her father with a kind of fierce delight. "He is given into my hands!"—Mr. Ingleby had said—"Into the pit which he has digged for another shall he fall! This letter, Gertrude, is what I have been waiting for. It contains the proofs—yes, I may say the proofs, of that man's craft and guile."—As the pioneer might stand, match in hand, at the end of his countermine, and listen gleefully to the pick-strokes of the unsuspecting enemy—so stood Mr. Ingleby, with Lynn's letter in his hand.—"At last," he went on, "I shall be able to lay bare his treachery! I shall let Arthur see in his true colours the man whom he has trusted, almost to his ruin!"—Gertrude, of course, knew well who was the 'man' referred to; and could guess at the errand on which her father had gone.

When Mr. Ingleby did at length appear, he produced such a sensation in that quiet, well-ordered household as it had certainly never known before. His look and demeanour showed what was, for him, the most violent excitement. He stalked up and down the room, glaring fiercely the while, until Mrs.

Ingleby became quite nervous with the thought that reason must have fled its lofty throne. Family worship was forgotten. Instead of conducting the usual ‘exercises,’ Mr. Ingleby broke into a hot invective against the traitor Arden—and from that passed to a full account of the change in Arthur Lynn’s circumstances, and how it had been brought about.

“I had not meant,” he concluded, “to tell him, or you, or anyone of this, until the time appointed had expired. But now that this man and his daughter—these” (etc., etc.)—“have got possession of the secret, it is right, it is even necessary, that you should know. An effort must be made to bring Arthur down here—anywhere—out of the hands of these unscrupulous adventurers, who will never rest until they have drained his purse to the last penny, and beggared him in body and—and in soul!”

The effect produced by Mr. Ingleby’s revelation was almost histrionic. The members of his family sat round him, positively hushed into awe and wonder. Mrs. Ingleby remained speechless and motionless, her knitting-needles suspended in mid-air, and the mental struggle required to comprehend it all plainly expressed on her features. Dick, recovering from the first shock of amazement, was seized with a violent longing to fall on his cousin's neck, and at once borrow £5. "Five!" he said within himself; "I suppose he could as easily make it fifty! It would be all the same to him. What a tremendous stroke of luck!"

"I'm so glad!" cried Caroline. "Won't it be nice to have a cousin as rich as that! Only fancy papa knowing about it all the time, and never saying a word! *I* couldn't have done that. Why, it's just like one of the story-books!—it's like *Great Expectations!*"

"What is that, may I ask?" inquired Mr. Ingleby.

"It's a novel, papa—all about an old man, a convict or something, that leaves all his money to a young man—"

"I have not read the work you mention,"

said Mr. Ingleby severely; "nor should I, from your description, conceive it to be at all of an edifying character."

"But, my dear," said Mrs. Ingleby to her husband, at last regaining her powers of speech —"why, when you knew Arthur had all this money, why did you let him go as a tutor to the Macritchies? I do not understand you at all."

"I did not expect you would," said Mr. Ingleby, with difficulty keeping his temper. "I explained all that just now, but you are still too much flurried by your astonishment to take in the sense of what I say. Gertrude will be able to tell you what my motives were, and how they have been thwarted."

"Then Gerty knew all about it!"—cried Caroline. "Well, I never!" — and Mrs. Ingleby lifted up her hands in increased amazement.

"Father," said Gertrude, "what do you mean to do now?"

"Do!" exclaimed Mr. Ingleby—"I shall go myself to London, partly to get at the bottom of all this villainy, and partly to see whether something may not yet be done, before it is too late, to reclaim this unfortunate young man!"

"Unfortunate?" said Dick—"Oh, come, you know, that's—" at which point the youth was cut short by an angry "Silence, sir!" —from his father.

But the excitement kindled by Mr. Ingleby's tale was not to be repressed.

"Why," said Mrs. Ingleby, desperately clinging to a concrete idea amid the chaos of fancies that drove her almost to distraction—"why, Arthur will be able to come here now —and to live in a house with a Lodge!"

To Mrs. Ingleby, the Lodge was the analogue in the loftiest social sphere of the gig of respectability. The idea of the Lodge was the high-water mark of her imagination. Having risen to this conception, the flood-tide of thought began slowly to subside. And then there came before Mrs. Ingleby's inward eye a vision of herself and her daughters passing through her nephew's gilded gates;

and she even allowed herself to speculate whether Mr. Ingleby might not at last 'set up' a carriage, so that they might approach Arthur's dwelling befittingly. It would be so strange to walk humbly past the Lodge, and up the avenue of their honoured kinsman!

Caroline's fancy had meanwhile fluttered away to a ball in her cousin's mansion—to which Miss Macritchie was not invited—while Dick's had folded its pinions above a billiard-table in the same splendid abode. Suddenly, however, Dick's face became overcast.

"Oh, confound it!" he cried, "I know what Arthur will do! He'll buy a big yacht, and go off to Norway, or Naples, or some of those places—yes, that's what he'll do!"

"Richard!" exclaimed Mr. Ingleby, "if you cannot be sensible, I insist on your remaining silent. These idle and worldly remarks are simply disgraceful at a moment when your cousin's fortune—the happiness of his life, even—are at stake; when he is still in the hands of those unprincipled schemers."

"But, Peter," said Mrs. Ingleby, timidly, "I don't understand it, yet. Why should Mr. Arden want to cheat Arthur, you know, when Arthur is going to marry his daughter?"

"You are worse than Richard!" cried her husband. "Will you never understand, Matilda, that the thing you speak of is impossible?—that it must not be? Have I not told you that this young woman is one who—" and here Mr. Ingleby gave a vigorous sketch of a female character, apparently compounded of Delilah and Manon Lescaut.

"I always said Camilla Arden was cunning and deceitful!" remarked Caroline. "Did I not tell you so, Gertrude, from the very first?"

"You have no right to judge others uncharitably, Caroline," said Mr. Ingleby. "Such conduct is most unbecoming in one of your years.—Richard! Leave this room!—I will not permit you, nor any of my family, to laugh at my words.—Leave this room, sir, at once!"

"All right, I'll go," said Dick. "But oh! I say, *won't* Arthur make the money spin!"

"He is a fool—a perfect hopeless fool!" said Mr. Ingleby. "I always told you what he would be!"—and he glared at his wife, as though she were the person solely responsible for the melancholy fact.

"You will go to London at once, father?" said Gertrude. "You won't let Arthur hear the story from any one but yourself?"

"Such is my intention, Gertrude," said Mr. Ingleby. "But I have a Duty—a Public Duty of paramount importance to perform. When that is done, I shall attend to Arthur's interests. I shall leave for London by the mail to-morrow night."

Next day, which was that of the Nomination, Mr. Ingleby performed his Public Duty. Before the amazed and almost incredulous eyes of Shawkirk, there was driven slowly to the Court-House an open carriage, wherein Bailie Trotter and Mr. Ingleby appeared sitting side by side, with Mr. Robert Sanderson as their *vis-à-vis*. The Bailie was all nods and becks and wreathed smiles; his broad red face glowed with self-complacence;

and he kept waving his large dirty hands to the shouting populace on either side. Mr. Sanderson lounged on his seat with his hands in his pockets, to the admiration of the Shawkirk 'chiels,' who were more accustomed to see the great Leader perched on the tram of a coal-cart, and marvelled at the ease and grace with which he accommodated himself to circumstances. The Saumon lads and others of the working-men made up a kind of informal escort; while the youth of Shawkirk, following in the rear of the carriage, rent the air with their cries. But Mr. Ingleby sat erect and unmoving, his eyes fixed on the small of the coachman's back, his lips tightly compressed, and his brow frowning, with all the air of a Martyr to Duty—about as cheerful an object as the slave in the triumphal car of a Roman imperator.

Many were the comments, free and loudly-spoken, called forth by Mr. Ingleby's public appearance as the Bailie's right-hand man. "Wha's yon wi' him i' the machine?"—"It's never auld Ingleby?"—"Ay, but it's jist him, mates! He's gaun tae nô-minate the Bailie!"—"Aye, it's Coal Rob that's din't! It's him that's gotten ower the auld man! Eh, lads, there's nane like him!"—"Wha'd ha' thocht o' seein' auld Ingleby foregath'rin' with the workin'-man?"—these and such-like ejaculations must certainly have reached Mr. Ingleby's ear; but whatever he may have thought, he made no sign.

The arrival of the carriage at the Court-House produced quite a sensation. Several of Mr. Ingleby's personal friends, first thunderstruck, then indignant at this unparalleled treachery to the cause of Capital, remonstrated with him, interrogated, implored—but in vain. Turpie was furious; Hislop, puzzled and uneasy; Arden, seemingly indifferent. Mr. Macritchie and the members of the Conservative Committee, on the other hand, could not conceal their elation. "That's something like a split!" they said to each other, and smiled gleefully, and rubbed their hands. "So he's found out that plausible swindler at last, has he?" remarked

Mr. Macritchie. "Well, of the two, Trotter's not the worse. But they're not a nice pair to have to choose between."

At one o'clock, there was affixed to the outer door of the Court-House a notice-paper, with the names of the candidates and their respective nominators and seconders—Robert Arden, Stock-broker, Copthall Court and Hartington Gardens, London, nominated by Mr. Turpie; Sholto Douglas Hepburn Richie, commonly called Lord Elvan, by Mr. James Macritchie; and Jabez Trotter, Warehouseman, ——, by Mr. Peter Ingleby.

The news ran through Shawkirk like wildfire, that "auld Ingleby had nô-minated the Bailie." Nothing since the beginning of the contest had so fanned the public excitement as Mr. Ingleby's *coup de théâtre*. It made him popular, for the first time in his life, with the working-men, and his own hands at the Victoria Works began to dream wild dreams of a speedy 'rise.' Mr. Arden's supporters, on the other hand, went about denouncing Mr. Ingleby as a turn-coat, a rat, a renegade, a demagogue more dangerous than even the Bailie himself. There was much speculation in Shawkirk as to the reason of Mr. Ingleby's advocacy of the man whom he had been known to refer to as "that incendiary Trotter." Various theories were started, but none of a convincing kind. Dick Ingleby found himself beguiled that day into one bar after another, where drinks were 'stood' him, and questions asked. By way of answer, Dick dropped sundry dark hints, in a confidential whisper, as to a mysterious Something which he might reveal if he chose; but further than that he could not be tempted. He reached home, late that night, in a somewhat dishevelled and excited state. Fortunately for Dick, however, Mr. Ingleby was already gone. His Public Duty performed, he had left for London; and while Shawkirk yet rang with praise, and abuse, of him, was rushing southward in the night express.

CHAPTER XIX.

ELECTIONEERING.

On the evening of the Nomination day, a great man made his entry into Shawkirk. On that evening a small band of politicians—among whom Calder the engineer, Sandy Tennant the slater, and Mr. David Messer were conspicuous—might have been seen at the railway station, awaiting the arrival of one of the local trains. These men spoke seldom, and their faces wore an expression of solemn expectancy. When the train drew up to the platform they crowded eagerly in front of a third-class compartment, whence the countenance of Mr. Laidlaw from Yetholm protruded, flushed and exultant.

"I've got him, Calder!" shouted Mr. Laidlaw, as he sprang to the platform—then, turning to the compartment—"Hoo are ye feelin' yersel', Tammas?" he asked anxiously. "Come awa', man, come your ways! Here's Mester Messer and the Saumon lads waitin' on ye!—Man, Calder, but he's in gran' fettle, the auld man! As canty as ever!"

Two collie dogs, models of sedateness, next came forth from the carriage. Then there appeared an old, old man, with a wrinkled, puckered, ill-natured face, a shaggy white beard, a grey 'maud,' and a shepherd's crook. Calder and the others crowded round to shake him by the hand, but the old man took no notice of their greetings. He stood for some time in the centre of his admirers, taking snuff with a spoon, and coughing violently an asthmatic cough. Then Messrs. Laidlaw and Calder placed him between them; the two collie dogs followed at his heels; the rest of the deputation closed in behind; and the procession thus formed set out for Mr. Messer's abode. That night it was known throughout Shawkirk that the Saumon lads had "brocht ower auld Trumbull"—

and speculation was rife as to the political movement thereby foreshadowed.

Mr. Thomas Turnbull had at one time been a dweller in Shawkirk. He had been cordially disliked in the borough as a cantankerous niggard, whose sole joy lay in the propagation of scandal. He had a positive genius for sifting out ugly secrets regarding his neighbours. If a man had a skeleton in his cupboard, Mr. Turnbull was sure to make the grisly thing rattle its bones in the market-place. Thus it came to pass that in the fulness of time Mr. Turnbull made the borough too hot to hold him, and was fain to betake him to the solitude of a pastoral life. Thenceforward he dwelt in one of those lone green valleys where the traveller hears no sound save the wail of the wind and the plash of the burn over the grey boulders, the 'whistling of plover and bleating of sheep'—where he half-expects to come upon the still glowing embers of a Covenanters' fire. There Mr. Turnbull brooded deeply over men and things. There his memory kept fresh and green the scandals of a past generation, until the rolling years brought about a revulsion of opinion among his former fellow-townsmen. The Solitary came to be regarded as a Sage. Men who had visited him in his lonely vale came back to proclaim at the bar and the street-corner the profound things the recluse had said on politics, and the strange and racy revelations he had made concerning Shawkirk's mightiest. At last, during an election, he had emerged from his retirement, and become a 'voice' at various political meetings—a voice which covered speakers with confusion, and thrilled their hearers with delight. Thereafter his reputation was established. He was looked upon by the most advanced thinkers in the borough as a living repository of social and political lore. It was they who had despatched Mr. Laidlaw to bring him forth from his seclusion, as Epimenides the Cretan was brought forth of old, when a crisis had arisen in the haunts of Hellenic men.

It required no urgent solicitation to bring Mr. Turnbull to his native town. The present contest offered a specially tempting field for the exercise of his peculiar gifts. To be a 'voice' was no longer within his power, as his asthma had become chronic, and he was unable to speak above a husky half-whisper. But at least he could inspire other 'voices;' for which purpose, indeed, Messrs. Laidlaw and Calder had sought his aid.

It was necessary to husband Mr. Turnbull's strength, and likewise to isolate him, so far as possible, from the madding crowd, which might in its rashness have sullied the clear well of truth. So they watched over him with more than filial care; and took as much pains to secure him from public attention as if he had been a Russian Czar or a Derby favourite. It had been arranged that the old man should sojourn, during the election, under Mr. Messer's hospitable roof. There they stayed him with flagons, and eagerly awaited the exposition of his views. But 'Tammas'—as he was addressed by his familiars—proved to be crustily reticent, to the disappointment of the conclave in Mrs. Messer's kitchen.

"Ye'd be wonderin', Tammas, I'se warrant ye," observed Mr. Messer, "whan ye heard tell aboot auld Ingleby? Wasna' that a queer gate for him tae gang, takin' up wi' the Bailie, yon way?"

Tammas vouchsafed no answer.

"I couldna' believe my ain een," said Calder, "whan I saw the auld man sittin' yonder wi' his glow'rin' face aside the Bailie, after a' that's come an' gane. I'm thinkin', noo, Tammas, that Arden an' him maun hae cuist oot? I'se wager ye ken mair aboot it yersel' than ony o' us."

Mr. Turnbull took snuff with a spoon, but said nothing.

"I'm thinkin' Coal Rob had somethin' tae dae wi't," remarked Mr. Laidlaw. "He's a clever man, Mester Hislop, but Coal Rob's ower mony for him."

"Ay," assented Mr. Messer, "what Coal Rob disna' ken aboot the politics is no warth kennin'. It was an ill day for Arden whan *he* gaed agin' him."

"He's no dune wi' Arden yet," said Sandy Tennant oracularly.

This remark, coming from such an authority, was followed by an interval of silence. Then Mr. Calder gave expression to the general curiosity.

"What's he gaun tae dae, Sandy?" he said. "Tell us a' aboot it, man! We're a' frien's here."

"Nae doot," replied the slater; "but ye mauna' speer at me. Bide a bit, lads, an' ye'll see for yersel's. It's somethin' by ordinar', though—the like o't hasna' been seen in the borough!"

"I thocht sae," said Mr. Calder. "I saw Coal Rob at the Saumon Inn the day, an' thinks I tae mysel', 'Ay, my man, gif ye spak oot a' that's in your thochts, ye'd put the fear o' death on some folks!'—He disna' say muckle, Coal Rob, but he's aye *thinkin'*. He'll dae for Arden yet, an' that ye'll see!"

"Arden was ca'in' here the day," observed

Mr. Messer, between two puffs of his clay pipe—"an' Hislop wi' him, seekin' ma vote an' interest."

"Ay? An' what did he say til' ye?" inquired Mr. Laidlaw.

"He's a raal ceevil-spoken gentleman," put in Mrs. Messer.

"They're aye that at election times, his kind," said her husband. "He shook han's wi' me, an' the mistress, an' said I was an auld frien' o' his. He minded me fine whan I was in Lynn's warks."

"An' what did ye say til' him, Dauvid?" asked Calder.

"Oh, I said I wadna' promise tae vote for him—no' that I had onythin' agin' him, but I thocht that the Bailie was a better man for the likes o' us. Then he begoud tae crack wi' me aboot young Mester Lynn. They're unco' chief, tae believe him, up thaur whaur he comes frae."

"That's gey an' queer," remarked Calder. "Did ye see yon in the *Warden*, Dauvid? If a' yon's true, or the half o't, he canna' be the richt frien' for young Mester Lynn, I'm thinkin'."

"Mebbe it's true," said Mr. Messer, "an' mebbe it's no'. It'll no' dae tae lippen tae a' ye hear at election times.—Man, he was a raal fine lad, young Mester Lynn! Ye min' hoo he used to sit here an' gi'e us his crack? An' tae think o' him haein' tae learn yon twa laddies their letters, an' his faither the richest man, aince, in the borough!"

"His faither was a grand man," said Sandy Tennant; "a true frien' o' the workin'-man. There's mony a ane in Shawkirk rues the day whan the Lynnfield warks was stoppit. I'm thinkin' ye'll no fin' a maister amang them a', noo, that 'ud put his han' in his pocket for the guid o' the workin'-man. It's a' saft speakin' noo-a-days, an' ne'er a saxpence tae come oot o't."

"That's what I like aboot the Bailie," said Mr. Calder. "He disna' gi'e ye a lot o' big words, like Arden, but jist gangs straucht tae the pint. He ca'd on me the ither day tae seek for my vote, an' says he tae me, 'Weel, Calder, hoo's a'thing wi' ye?' says he. 'No' weel ava',' says I, 'times is bad, Bailie.' 'Aye,' says he, 'but we'll sune hae them made better. There's ower muckle clash in the Paurlament already,' says he, 'an' gin ye want mair, ye'll jist hae tae put in the ither man. But gin ye want your wages up, ye'll hae tae put in *me*. Ye maun strengthen the han's o' William Ewart Gladstone,' says he."

"Ay," said Mr. Messer approvingly, "that was richt. We maun strengthen *his* han's. The maisters hae had it a' their ain way lang eneuch. But we'll see a change yet—eh, Tammas?"

'Tammas,' however, continued irresponsive. It was in vain that they sought to decoy the Border Apemantus either into general political debate, or into criticism of the candidates. The oracle was as mute as the oaks of Dodona; and the conversation turned next to the public meetings of the morrow, and to the 'dressing' which, as it appeared, Mr. Arden was to receive at the hands of the redoubtable Sandy.

The following day was one of increased excitement in Shawkirk. Wherever men congregated, their talk was of the election, and of nothing else. All manner of rumours flew about the town, not a few of them connected with the name of Mr. Ingleby. Everyone in Shawkirk took a keen interest in the affairs of everyone else; and various theories were started to account for Mr. Ingleby's singular proceedings. It was felt that something very unusual must have occurred, to draw him away from the borough at the height of a contested election. But Mr. Ingleby had impressed on his household the duty of secrecy; and had laid on all gossip so strict an embargo that it was vain for Mrs. Macritchie to cross-question Mrs. Ingleby and the 'dear girls'—or for the young men on the various committees to waylay Dick, and inveigle him into bars. Try as they might, they could glean no certain information; only vague and tantalising hints as to surprises yet in store.

No man ever knew what trials were endured, what labours accomplished by Mr. Hislop in those days. It was his to counteract, so far as possible, the adverse influence of Mr. Ingleby's sudden antagonism; and to keep a watchful eye on the doings of Mr. Sanderson, whose repertory of political tricks was, as he believed, not yet exhausted. But the hardest of his tasks was to keep his client, as he phrased it, "up to the scratch." The tidings of Mr. Ingleby's hasty departure had filled Mr. Arden with a consuming desire to follow straightway on his trail. His dislike of Shawkirk grew into positive loathing, as he thought of himself tied down to that abominable place, while his adversary, up in London, was working against him unopposed. If only he were within reach of Lynn's ear, Mr. Ingleby would not find it so easy to poison the young man's mind against him. That, however, could not be, so long as the election was in progress; and in the meantime, there was no saying what harm might be done. Twice he had written to his daughter, without receiving an answer; a circumstance which added to his uneasiness. For Camilla's influence was now the only thing he had to trust to, as against Mr. Ingleby's malign interference.

Mr. Arden spoke to his agent about leaving the contest to go on for forty-eight hours without him, while he made a flying visit to the metropolis on urgent private affairs. But Mr. Hislop shook his head. "It would be fatal," he said; "it would infallibly lose you the seat." Now Mr. Arden did not wish to lose the seat, after spending so much money and enduring so much tribulation to gain it. So he gave up the idea of pursuing Mr. Ingleby, wrote another letter to his daughter, and persevered in his hateful task—not, however, without certain cold fits and shirkings of the disagreeable which added to Mr. Hislop's troubles.

"You *must* do these things, my dear sir," the agent would say to him, "if you want to sit for a Scotch borough. You *must* go to them hat in hand. After they elect you, you know, you can put on your hat, and walk away."

" But if they don't elect me ?"

" Whatever you do, you must not breathe a doubt of that. Besides, I honestly think you will go in. Ingleby has done us some harm, but nothing that may not be retrieved. They can't stomach Trotter, a lot of the people here. The masters hate him, because he's a Socialist, or next to it—and the men, that is, the most of them, because he's a Permissive Bill-ite. The Teetotalers, of course, will go for him solid, but certainly no other class in the borough."

" Not the Liberationists ?"

" I don't think so. Besides, the Church is stronger here than you would suppose. I tell you what it is, Mr. Arden—I have been pretty nearly all round to-day, and I think our prospects are looking bright, sir—decidedly bright. There's a great number of people suspending their judgment—they will be swayed by your big speech to-night either one way or the other. You know well enough what to say. Once get you on the platform, Mr. Arden, and I've no fear for the upshot. The Bailie can make a row, but they're used to him, you see. Now, there's something fresh in your style, something novel, and all that. It takes with the people here, I assure you. It's a God's mercy, Mr. Arden, that you can *speak*, at all events."

"Thanks," said Mr. Arden.

The Corn Exchange at Shawkirk was a large oblong building, with a vaulted roof, rows of tall windows, and an asphalted floor. At one end was a spacious platform; facing that, a small gallery. Long before the hour of Mr. Arden's meeting the hall was packed with electors and non-electors, who had come in their hundreds to test—and expand—the candidate's knowledge of politics. The gallery had been taken possession of by the 'Saumon lads' and their sympathisers, whose demeanour made it evident, even before the proceedings began, that the meeting would be a lively one. There, in the most conspicuous seat of the gallery, just over the clock, a place had been found for the Sage; and round him were gathered Laidlaw, Calder, Wattie Messer, and other kindred spirits. There, also, was seated Sandy Tennant, not joining in the jest and shout, but wearing a look of grave pre-occupation, as became one whose function at an election meeting was known and recognised. There, also, was the great leader, Coal Rob himself, seated by his lieutenant's side. His presence in the Corn Exchange gave rise to some comment, for Bailie Trotter was also to address a public meeting that night; and there was no known reason in Mr. Sanderson's case, as there was in Sandy Tennant's, why he should not have been there to back up his own candidate. No one, however, ventured to ask Mr. Sanderson what he was doing in that gallery, nor why he fixed such an anxiously expectant gaze on the side-door from which Mr. Arden and his supporters would emerge on the platform.

At last the candidate appeared. He was received with a thunder of plaudits from the body of the hall; and, from the gallery, with a chorus of sounds locally known as 'booin'.' Mr. Arden was followed by Mr. Turpie, Mr.

Hislop, and the members of his Committee. As the great men of Shawkirk one by one appeared, they were saluted with appropriate cries. These cries came chiefly from the front of the gallery, whence Laidlaw, Calder, and their friends gave publicity to the personalities croaked forth by the Sage. "What wull 'oo cry tae this ane, Tammas?"—they asked, as the Shawkirk notables were in turn recognised. Then the aged man—his eyes blinking with malign glee, and his withered face lit up with impish animation—would tell them things, Doric and pungent, rankling and mystical—the essence of the scandals of the days of old—which no one could hear said of him and remain unabashed.

But Mr. Sanderson sat silent amid the din, his gaze still fixed on the platform-door. All at once his features relaxed, and his eyes glistened. Among the last of Mr. Arden's committee, still defiling from the ante-room, a tall, spare, dark man in a black cloak had suddenly appeared. Those on the platform, busied in finding themselves seats, did not at first understand the reason of the hush which fell upon the crowded hall. But presently a low, significant murmur arose in Mr. Sanderson's neighbourhood, and gradually spread until it reached the platform itself. Mr. Sanderson had risen to his feet in manifest excitement, grasping Sandy Tennant by the sleeve. "*It's him, Sandy*," he said; "*it's the Infidel, praise the Lord!* Man, but this is gran'! I was fearin' that mebbe Cooper had bungled the job after a', but ye see he's gotten him! Noo, I maun be aff tae look after the Bailie—ye've got the questions wi' ye?—ye'll mak' it a' richt wi' Arden?" Mr. Tennant said nothing. He only nodded, and smiled grimly.

Mr. Hislop had by this time observed with fury and dismay the advent of the Pariah among his client's supporters. Raising his eyes to the gallery, he saw Mr. Robert Sanderson hurrying forth from the hall; and knew at once from what quarter this underhand blow had come. Some surprise of the kind he had looked for, but nothing so startling and original as this. A feeling of secret admiration mingled itself with Mr. Hislop's wrath against the rival party manager.

This was the stroke of diplomacy which has made the name of Coal Rob immortal in the Shawkirk Boroughs—in which, as all men, whether friends or foes, acknowledged, that great leader reached the high-water mark, the *ne plus ultra* of electioneering strategy. Knowing well the odium that would cling to any cause publicly espoused by the Man in the Cloak, Mr. Sanderson had set himself to solve this problem :—How to get the Infidel on Mr. Arden's side, and on Mr. Arden's platform? After drinking deeply on the subject, and preserving a silence of three days, Mr. Sanderson had despatched an emissary to the Infidel's abode, with the request that he would allow his name to be added to Mr. Arden's committee-list, and give that gentleman his support on the platform at the Corn Exchange. The Infidel had consented, and the thing was done, with a result which quite answered Mr. Sanderson's expectations. The appearance of a water-bailiff on that platform could hardly have been more prejudicial to Mr. Arden's interests. The orthodox Liberals of Shawkirk were horror-stricken to find such an ally in their ranks. One of the U.P. and one of the Free Kirk ministers, who held conspicuous places by the candidate's side, shuddered at the sight and were afraid; knowing well what allusions would be made to them by Mr. Smail, in his next leader in the *Border Warden.* A number of the waverers, who had come to Mr. Arden's meeting to have their minds made up, began to question whether they could conscientiously vote for the candidate round whom incarnate Atheism had thus rallied. So far, Mr. Sanderson's intrigue had been brilliantly successful.

Attention was diverted from the Infidel, for the present at least, by the moving of Mr. Turpie, of the Townhead Tannery, into the chair. Mr. Turpie introduced the candidate —whom he referred to as "my honourable friend"—in the fragments of an eloquent speech, which he had delivered with much fluency to the chairs and tables of his sitting-room on at least twelve previous occasions. "*Wha pusioned the air for the puir folk?*"—shouted a Voice, in the middle of Mr. Turpie's most ornate period. "It's a lie!" shouted back Mr. Turpie, whom this often-tried insinuation never failed to 'draw'—"I tell you, I never—" the remainder of the defence being lost in a roar of laughter from the audience. Allusions to the odorous side of the leather industry were frequent during the rest of Mr. Turpie's performance; and as the speaker invariably stopped to notice these and to repel them, he became exceedingly hot and flustered before resuming his seat.

Then Mr. Arden stepped to the front of the platform. He was to all appearance perfectly cool; and waited with quiet deliberation until the alternate storms of applause and hissing had spent themselves, before beginning his speech. Mr. Arden had a pleasant voice, which could be distinctly heard in every part of the hall; so that though they shouted "Speak up!" to him, the exhortation was understood to be merely formal. Some critics, it is true, were disappointed by the want of breadth in his accent—it was so unlike the 'large utterance' of the Bailie. Mr. Messer's sense of justice, however, constrained him to remind those cavillers that Mr. Gladstone himself had spoken "just that way." This, of course, settled the matter; further objection, after that, would have seemed frivolous—almost profane.

Mr. Arden, acting on his agent's hint, began his speech by a high-pitched reference to his early life in Shawkirk. He spoke of his intimacy with and regard for the late Mr. Lynn of Lynnfield—a man than whom, as many in that hall knew, the working-men of Scotland had never had a truer friend. It was a privilege to have known such a man—to have held converse with him—to have helped him, were it never so humbly, in working out his great designs. His own attention had been first turned to politics, and especially to the fundamental, crucial question of the Rights of Labour, by that large-hearted, high-souled, self-sacrificing man —one of the very noblest of Scottish philanthropists—whose misfortune and glory it was to have marched too far in advance of his generation.

Here the Sage, who had been listening eagerly to each word as it dropped from Mr. Arden's lips, seemed to struggle with an inspiration—as the Pythoness struggled, when inspired and mastered by the god. "Ay, Tammas?" said Calder anxiously, "oot wi't—what is't, man?" —"Cry til' him"—whispered the Sage—"Cry, 'Wha pluckit the auld man?'"—and here Mr. Turnbull was seized with a prolonged and violent fit of coughing. Then Calder cried with an exceeding cry:—"*Wha pluckit the auld man?*"—"Tae feather his ain nest," croaked the Sage.—"*Tae feather his ain nest?*"—bellowed Mr. Laidlaw—and then the flow of oratory ceased, and for some time confusion reigned in the hall.

The Sage's shot was not wasted. It spoiled the effect of Mr. Arden's *tremolo* passage, which had so far been highly effective. It obviously disconcerted the speaker; and gave the Trotterites an opportunity of saying "Ah, ha!"—in a meaning way that made Mr. Arden's supporters feel somewhat uncomfortable.

At length order was restored, and Mr. Arden went on with his speech, eschewing further reference to his studies in philanthropy at Lynnfield. All through his harangue he had to reckon with Mr. Laidlaw, Mr. Calder and the Saumon lads, who interjected their questions — usually introduced by the formula "What aboot" — at frequent and deftly-chosen intervals. All through the night the Sage went back into the 'moonlight of memory,' and brought forth jewels rich and rare of reminiscence, to be hurled at the heads of the candidate and his chief supporters. But Mr. Arden proved himself a match for his assailants. Most of their thrusts he ignored; some he parried with an apparent good-humour that won the favour of the audience; others he turned skilfully to his own advantage. Mr. Hislop sat behind his client's chair, rubbing his hands, and murmuring, "Capital! capital!"—at all the good points. Mr. Arden's peroration, in particular, was allowed to have been one of the best things in oratory that Shawkirk had ever heard. It was solemn, dignified, impressive; and as it consisted for the most part of a panegyric on the Prime Minister, it could not, of course, be interrupted as other portions of the speech had been. Mr. Arden sat down amid a clamour of applause, with the proud consciousness of having 'scored.' The sounds of disapproval from the gallery were swallowed up and lost in the mighty cheering that arose from the body of the hall. The gentlemen on the platform stood up, waving their hats; the audience followed suit. A son of toil near the front of the platform mounted on the back of a seat, and held out a dirty hand to Mr. Arden, who leant forward and grasped warmly the fingers of his admirer. This bit of bye-play evoked much enthusiasm. Then some one on the platform called for "Three cheers for our future member!"—and the cheers were given with full effect. It seemed to Mr. Arden, at that moment of exultation, as if the election were virtually won—as if he had already taken his seat for the Shawkirk Boroughs.

Mr. Arden was, however, promptly recalled to a sense of his true position. The Chairman intimated that any elector who wished to put a question to the candidate would now have the opportunity of doing so. Then there was a pause; for no elector in all that assemblage would have violated the unwritten code which assigned the *pas* to the arch-heckler of Shawkirk. At last Mr. Tennant rose in the front of the gallery; every face was at once turned towards him, and many voices gave him greeting. Mr. Tennant opened his mouth to speak, but his first words were lost in a great shout of "Platform! Platform!"—which rose from all parts of the hall. Then there was some laughter, with jocular cries of "Come awa' doon, man!"—"Speel ower the gallery!"—"Whaur's your ledder?"—etc. Mr. Tennant, resisting these blandishments, made his way by the staircase to the body of the hall, and was at once passed on to the platform. There he stood, looked Mr. Arden steadily, almost truculently, in the face, and put one hand in his trousers pocket. This was to show how cool he was. In his other hand he held out before him a dirty scrap of paper. Thus he stood for some moments, statuesque and silent, and the attitude roused the audience to enthusiasm. Macaulay tells us how the banished cavaliers felt an emotion of national pride when they saw a brigade of the old companions of Cromwell, outnumbered by foes and abandoned by friends, drive before it in headlong rout the finest infantry of Spain. Thus it was that even Mr. Arden's warmest supporters felt when they saw their townsman standing forth—grimy, moleskin-clad, and imperturbable—to give this rich and ambitious Londoner a lesson in politics. It was a proud moment for Mr. Tennant. "Heckle him weel, Sandy! Heckle him weel!"—roared the audience. The catechist accepted the ovation as his due, smiled menacingly on Mr. Arden, coughed artistically, took a glance at his scrap of paper, and began.

Mr. Arden had a very bad quarter of an hour with Sandy Tennant—in fact, the worst of the many bad quarters of an hour he had had since the contest opened. He was asked his opinion about obscure clauses in bills of which he had never heard. He was asked whether he would vote for or against certain private members' motions, of whose drift he was profoundly ignorant. Had Mr. Tennant catechised him about the Church question or the Drink question, about the Equalisation of the Borough and County Franchise, the Extension of the hours of polling, or the Abolition of Entail—Mr. Arden would have had his answer ready. But Mr. Tennant knew better than that. He did not ask a question which was not a trap. His object was, not to test the candidate's knowledge, nor even to ascertain his opinions, but simply to expose his ignorance. It would have taken a far cleverer man than Mr. Arden to win this game, in which all the advantage lay with his opponent. "Would you"—asked Mr. Tennant, beginning with his usual formula—"if returned as member for the Shawkirk Boroughs, support an amendment on the Ballot Act, with the view of making canvassing illegal?"—"Certainly," said Mr. Arden with cordial emphasis, thinking that an affirmative answer was wanted, and remembering his own experiences of the last few days. But this reply was received with a howl of disapprobation; the Shawkirk electorate, it appeared, had no idea of being represented in Parliament by one who had not sued for its suffrages, hat in hand; and Mr. Tennant smiled on his victim a pitying smile. This slip taught Mr. Arden caution. To other questions he answered that he had not yet decided on this point—that he would give it his most careful consideration—that he would be guided in his vote by the opinion of his constituents. But Mr. Tennant would have no shuffling. He had put a plain question, and he would have a plain answer—"Yes or No?"—"Ay, that's richt, Sandy," roared the audience again, "that's fair—Yes or No?"—Then the Chairman intervened to put down Mr. Tennant, and Mr. Tennant promptly put down the Chairman. He stood upon his rights. He would not have the candidate prompted by any man on that platform (Mr. Hislop having been detected at this point whispering words of counsel to his client). He would put the question again, he said sternly; and demanded an answer, "Yes or No." Mr. Arden still declining to commit himself, fierce cries of disapproval rose from the hall. "Ay, that's fair!"—"Yes or No?"—"Slate him, Sandy!"—"Heckle him weel!"—"He's got a slate lowse, I'm thinkin'"—the allusions to the catechist's lofty calling being followed by roars of laughter. Mr. Tennant wound up his string of questions by some of a distinctly personal kind, dealing with the candidate's religious opinions, his business, his relations with the party managers, and his preference for London over Shawkirk as a place of residence. These questions the Chairman—who had been feeling himself for the time a very inferior person to Mr. Tennant—pronounced out of order; and then interfered to end the torture. A show of hands was called for, and was given very greatly in Mr. Arden's favour. Then a gentleman rose to his feet to make a speech about the Chairman, and the audience rose to theirs to make their way to the door—amid cheers for "Arden," "the Bailie," and "Mester Gladstone."

"That's over, anyhow," said Mr. Arden, when he had got back to his hotel along with Mr. Hislop, after receiving the congratulations of his friends and committee-men.

"And well over, sir," said Mr. Hislop. "It was a good speech, Mr. Arden—a very good speech. That bit about Mr. Lynn was A1—and your finish up with Gladstone, you know, was excellent. Could not have been better."

"They seemed to interrupt a good deal," said Mr. Arden, a little doubtfully.

"Oh, that was nothing—they always do. Trotter will have to go through the mill just the same—and as for the heckling, it's a mere bit of comedy, you know. The meeting would not have been *right*, without it. Nobody could have answered that rascal slater's questions. You did as well as any man could have done."

"Glad you think so, I'm sure. Now, I'll just have one cigar, and then turn in. You don't need to come for me before eleven o'clock to-morrow, Hislop—I never felt so thoroughly fagged out, all my life before."

CHAPTER XX.

WEARY OF FEIGNING.

The longer Arthur Lynn reflected on Camilla's behaviour towards him that Sunday in Kensington Gardens, the more perplexed and anxious he became. He repeated to himself that her changed manner could not possibly be due to the influence of Mr. Dulcimer. None the less would he have been pleased to learn that Mr. Dulcimer had left town for the Sunny South, or any other region. It certainly looked suspicious, his lingering on in Camilla's neighbourhood, after the London season was over.

The Lone Peak Silver Mine, also, was still a cause of uneasiness to Lynn. It was, on the whole, a relief to him that he had sent that letter to his uncle; though at times he told himself that he had been wrong in so doing—that he had shown himself too ready to think evil of Mr. Arden, who had so warmly befriended him. But the seeds of mistrust had been sown; and though a moment's calm reflection had convinced him that Camilla could have no hand in any such matter, and that her few broken words about "deceiving" him, whatever they referred to, could not have referred to that—still, so far as Mr. Arden himself was concerned, Lynn was disposed to suspend his judgment. He always read the City articles now, and the things he saw there did not tend to reassure him. The *Forum*, in its references to Lone Peaks, was guarded, but on the whole not adverse. But there was another journal wherein certain angry letters appeared, signed "Victim," accusing Mr. Arden and his co-directors of buying in the shares of their own company, in order to force up the market value of the new stock. Then another correspondent wrote in defence of the directors, insinuating that "Victim" was an impostor, who only wanted to 'bear' the stock for his own base purposes. The result of the controversy, so far as Lynn was concerned, was to leave him in utter confusion of mind, but not to strengthen his faith in the Lone Peak as a sound commercial undertaking.

Between these two sources of trouble, Lynn was scarcely competent to bring to his work on the *Forum* that concentration of thought and strict attention to minutiæ which efficient sub-editing demands. He was haunted by Camilla's face, with the look of pain and pleading it had worn when he saw it last. That face came between him and his paragraphs continually, drawing him away from the railway accidents, Irish murders, and Salvation Army riots that ought to have engaged his mind. He felt that he could bear it no longer. He resolved that he would see Camilla once more. Then, surely, he would find that he had been exaggerating a passing coldness, giving undue weight to a moment's pique.

Lynn accordingly called at Hartington Gardens—and was informed by the impassive French that Miss Arden was "not at home." He called again on the following day, and met with the same reception. Lynn was now sure that he was being deceived—not by Camilla—no, he would not for a moment suspect *her*—but by Mrs. Chevenix. This was, no doubt, her idea of diplomacy. She had looked on him from the first, as he well knew, with extreme disfavour; and was now, presumably, trying with vulgar malice to prevent him from seeing Camilla in Mr. Arden's absence.

But Lynn was determined that he should not be baulked by Mrs. Chevenix. That lady was capable of directing a servant to lie; but she would scarcely dare to intercept a letter. He wrote to Camilla a brief note of the playfully tender, gently reproachful type—to which the appropriate answer would have been "Come!" This missive remained unanswered, and Lynn concluded that Camilla must be out of town. One afternoon, however, he saw her in the Park. She was riding along the now almost deserted Row; and her cavalier was Mr. Dulcimer. Lynn went home in a fury of jealousy. He did not contribute greatly that night to the bringing out of the *Forum*.

The next day Lynn rose early — about noon — and determined to work off his depression, if possible, by a row up the river. But a pull of ten miles in the rain did not make him feel any the more cheerful; and he came back to his lodgings thoroughly out of spirits. There the maid-of-all-work informed him that a gentleman had called during his absence, who desired to see him on pressing business, and would return for that purpose about five. It did not seem likely to Lynn that any business which concerned him could be particularly pressing, and he went out before five o'clock, forgetting all about this unknown visitor. A solitary dinner in a Fleet Street chop-house—coffee and a cigar afterwards in a neighbouring divan—left him as depressed as ever. He ought, of course, to have found a solace in Work, according to the maxims of all the preachers. But it seemed to Lynn quite certain that the preachers must have known nothing about sub-editing.

Indeed, as he walked along to the office that night, he felt quite convinced that in his present mood he would do no good either to himself or to the *Forum*. He was conscious of a strong impulse to hasten at once to Mr. Arden's house. The evening was certainly tempting. The freshness of recent rain was in the air; a cool, light wind was sweeping away the clouds; the western sky was radiant with flying colour. Lynn looked into the dark entrance of the *Forum* office. The black passage, with the dim lamp burning in it—the oily odour—the thought of the room above, stifling, gas-lit, vocal with the war-cry of the foreman—these things, he felt, were too much for him, just then. No—come of it what might, he *could* not go in there at that moment.

Besides, the 'copy' would not come in heavily for some time yet, and Sugden, he knew, would be quite fit to 'tackle' it till he returned. Sugden had nothing on his mind. Meanwhile, he would see Camilla. He would learn the truth from her lips, and return to the house of bondage either definitely knowing the worst, or having his doubts melted into air. On the whole, Lynn leant to the latter hypothesis, as he turned him from the now hateful office, and set his face to the West.

It is a sad confession to have to make regarding one who entered upon life with Lynn's opportunities. For to begin poor, as he had begun, is to have the chance of raising oneself into riches; and to do that is, of course, to achieve the modern equivalent of heroism. But then, that was not exactly in Lynn's way. It must be owned, moreover, that though he felt two or three conscientious twinges as he left the *Forum* office further behind him, the sense of truanting gave a not unpleasant spice of excitement to his reflections. His spirits rose as he approached Hartington Gardens. The wet, gleaming streets, the tossing trees, the windy pale-blue sky overhead, the long lamp-lit vistas with the glimpses of sunset beyond—seemed the forewarrant of some charming romantic incident. He would not put that in peril by going prosaically to the door of Mr. Arden's house, possibly to meet with another rebuff. He would reconnoitre.

Lynn accordingly turned down the lane that separated Mr. Arden's from the adjoining property, and led to the stables behind. He had reason to congratulate himself on this flank movement, for, glancing through the railings, he had a glimpse of a white dress fluttering among the shrubs beyond. Lynn did not doubt that this must be Camilla; he knew that she often walked there. He tried the side gate, found it unlocked, and at once entered the garden.

There was a privet hedge on either side of him, and in front a shaded walk. It was dusk; the air was moist and full of fragrance; the trees were shining and dripping after the recent shower. He heard the sound of Camilla's footstep on the gravel, as she came slowly down the walk towards the side-path where he was standing. Then he saw her pass before him. Even in the twilight he fancied that she looked unusually pale ; and so deep in thought she seemed, that she would have gone by without noticing him if he had not spoken.

" Camilla !" he said, softly.

She started, looked up, and saw him, but there was no smile of recognition on her face.

" My darling !" he cried ; " have I frightened you ? I should not have come at this time and in this way, but how else was I to see you ? And I *must* see you, Camilla !"

" You have—startled me, a little," she said, drawing back from him.

" Camilla," he said at last, " there is something wrong. Something—or someone—has come between us. Are you displeased at my coming here ? Shall I go without saying another word to you ?"

"No—I am not displeased at your coming. Perhaps it is better that you have come. I have sought to avoid you, but that was mere weakness on my part."

"*You have sought to avoid me?*" repeated Lynn slowly.

"Yes."

"And you left my letter unanswered?"

"Yes."

"Camilla," said Lynn, "what does this mean? Tell me what has happened within these few weeks to change you so? Is it anything that I have said or done?—anything that has made you angry with me?"

"Nothing—nothing! It is not *I* who have any cause to be angry."

"Then, what is it? What are you keeping from me? Remember, *we* cannot afford to have lovers' quarrels. It is only the people for whom everything has been made smooth who can."

"This is not a lovers' quarrel. It need not be a quarrel at all. I wish—yes, I wish it were that, and nothing more!"

"Camilla, let me know the worst! Whatever it is, I must know it some time—and I wish to know it now."

"I—I cannot tell you," she said at last. "You will know soon enough. But I cannot tell you."

"Has your father spoken against me?" persisted Lynn. "Is it he who has prompted you to—to—"

"No, no! He has not spoken against you. He would be angry with me if—if he heard me now. No one has prompted me to do what I am doing. It is all of my own free will."

"Is it because . . . because I am poor? Is it the old story over again, Camilla? Are you going to sacrifice the happiness of both of us to the miserable dread. . . . No, no! Forgive me. I had forgotten what I promised you. I know it is not that."

"You are right. It is not that."

"Then, Camilla—you force me to ask it—and if you wish me to go at once and for ever, you have only to say 'Yes'—is there any one you care for, more than you used to care for me?"

For a little while she did not speak. At last her answer came. It was a scarcely audible "No."

"I knew it!" cried Lynn; "I was sure of it! Oh, my love"—he went on, with an inconsistency of which he was unconscious—"what a load you have lifted from my mind! Did you not say that you would care for me, always—whatever my position in the world might be?"

"You must not say such things to me"—she exclaimed. "I must not hear them from you! How can I make you understand!"

"By telling me plainly, if there is anything to be told."

"I cannot—I cannot! It has been all a mistake from the beginning—a dreadful mistake. I did wrong in speaking to you as I did at Sprayton—I have done wrong ever since. There must be an end to this, Arthur—for your sake, there must. Nothing but misery, for you and for me, has come of it."

"Camilla," said Lynn, very gravely, "are you speaking in earnest? You spoke of having deceived me—"

"And I say so still."

"What that means I do not know, and do not care to know. You did not deceive me that night by the sea-shore at Sprayton—whatever you may say now. Have you changed to me since then? You don't know yourself, Camilla, if you think so!"

"You are right," she said, slowly. "I have not changed since that night at Sprayton—not at all."

"I knew that," said Lynn; "and until you tell me that you have, I shall never give you up."

"You don't understand me. It is what I did that night I would undo if I could—yes, that is the truth!" she said, almost defiantly. "I did a wicked, foolish thing then that I have regretted ever since. I cannot explain it—I cannot ask you to forgive me now—but

I have told you the truth, and nothing can make me unsay it!"

"You regret what passed between us? You deceived me that night at Sprayton?"

"Yes, I did—I deceived you then. More than that, I went there knowing that I must deceive you."

"Camilla, what you are saying cannot be true. That you had grown tired of me, because I was poor, or because you had learned to care for someone else, that I might have understood. But I cannot believe that you were so heartless as to do that other thing."

"No? I am surprised at that, since you can believe so much. Perhaps, after all," she added with a mirthless smile, "you don't quite understand me."

"I do not," he said, the irony in her tone increasing his bewilderment. "You told me this very night that you cared for no one but me—that my position in the world had nothing to do with—"

"Ah, there again I have deceived you. Believe me, it *is* your position that has made me resolve to do what I have done. I know that sounds very mercenary, as well as contradictory — I cannot help it — it is true. Some day you will take the same view of it as I do now—oh, yes, you will! You may not understand me, but I understand myself too well. You must go, now. You must never come again."

"I shall not go," said Lynn, "until you tell me plainly what this thing is that you have done."

"Since you force it from me, I shall tell. I am about to be married—to Mr. Dulcimer."

Lynn started as if he had been struck; and at once turned to go. But having taken a few steps, came back again to where she stood.

"I used to wonder," he said, "how, after I had lost you—for I told myself that I must lose you—I used to wonder how I should look back, long years after, on the days when we were dear to one another. But now—you have not left me a memory that is not hateful.

You have made the past as empty and bitter for me as the future must be!"

"You will not find the future so very bitter, after a time. You will meet with consolation."

"Even now I cannot bring myself to believe it! Camilla, say it is not true!"

"I cannot. It is true."

"Then I pray to God that we may never meet again! So, this was what you wanted, when you bade me come to London! I see it all now. But was it worth, Camilla?—was the thing you have gained worth what you have done to gain it?"

"I do not know what you mean."

"I shall not repeat that man's name—you cannot help knowing what I mean. But was there no other way?—could none other than your old lover have served your purpose?"

The girl's face flushed for a moment. She could not reasonably blame Lynn for missing the double sense of her answers. But that he should think her capable of beguiling him to London to aid her in the enslavement of

Mr. Dulcimer—the blow was cruel, and it stung her to anger in the midst of her self-abasement.

"No," she answered, "no one so well. No one else would have understood me so quickly and easily as you have done. Your question shows it!"

Lynn looked at her as she spoke, and thought that she had never seemed lovelier. Her anger was to her as fire is to a jewel—it made her beauty sparkle more brightly. But her loveliness did not then re-awaken his yearning to call her his own.

"The next time," he said at last, "that you seek to break a man's heart, let him in mercy be some one for whom the world has been less hard than it has been for me. Between you and me, there is no more to be said. You have ruined my life. And the worst of it all to me is this, that the wrong you have done yourself is greater than the wrong you have done me."

Next minute he was gone. She heard the clang of the iron gate. That sound seemed to mark the end of the fairest chapter in her life.

She turned towards the house, but did not at once go in. There was a stone seat in the loggia; she sat down on that, her head drooping, her hands clasped on her lap—in an attitude of utter dejection. The momentary anger that had enabled her to meet her lover's reproaches with what seemed heartless irony had passed quite away. All that she realised now was the aching sense of an irretrievable loss. She had hoped nothing from an interview with Arthur Lynn, and yet she was disappointed. Surely, even though he did not understand, he need not have so misunderstood her. Yet, could she blame him? Before long he would learn the truth, but that could make no difference now. He was gone beyond recall. Had it been in her power, she would not have sought to recall him. Let him go—to Gertrude; it was better so, for him.

Camilla had given Lynn to understand that she was engaged to be married to Mr. Dulcimer. In reality, things had not gone so far as that. It was, however, the case that Mr. Dulcimer had spoken; and was now awaiting an answer which he had reason to think would be favourable.

But for Lynn's appearance on the scene, the poet would never, in all probability, have come to the point of a proposal. The position of dangler-in-chief to Miss Arden would have contented this latter-day Ronsard; but, with Lynn for a rival, that part became impossible. Of late Mr. Dulcimer had grown quite serious in his pursuit of Camilla. He called it a 'passion;' and so it was, for vanity was a passion with Mr. Dulcimer. Mrs. Chevenix had done her best to bring him to a declaration; and had hinted, without seeming to do so, that if he did not speak at once, he would be left out in the cold. The thought of being left out in the cold was intolerable to Mr. Dulcimer; and, accordingly, he spoke.

Had Mr. Dulcimer possessed the gift of omniscience, he could not have chosen a more opportune moment for pressing his suit.

Miss Arden had just received a letter from her father, written from Shawkirk after his interview with Mr. Ingleby. Mr. Arden had hesitated between writing this letter, and allowing things to drift. But it had occurred to him that the story of Arthur Lynn's connection with the Lone Peak Mine would certainly reach his daughter's ears; and, as related by Mr. Ingleby, in a form not flattering to himself. He preferred that she—and, through her, Lynn—should have his version of the affair. She must understand that he had been acting in Lynn's interests, which were being criminally neglected by his uncle and guardian; that an opening for the investment of capital, such as might not occur twice in a century, having suddenly presented itself, he had put Lynn on the way of probably doubling his fortune. He had been obliged by circumstances, it was true, to do this indirectly; but none the less had it been done effectually, and the result would show who had been the young man's truest and warmest friend.

The state of mind into which Camilla was thrown by this letter was eminently favourable to Mr. Dulcimer's pretensions. This that her father had done was the one thing needed to make her position utterly unbearable. When the whole story was told—and it might be any day—it was possible, just possible, that Arthur himself might still believe in her, understand her, and forgive. But his friends—what would be their judgment on her conduct? And could she be sure that Lynn himself, after hearing his uncle's opinion, would not be shaken in his trust of her? It made the girl writhe to think of it. She could not bring herself to face Lynn or to write to him. The shame and disgrace that had come upon her overpowered her so, that she even forgot to be angry with the author of it all.

Then came Mr. Dulcimer's proposal. At another time, she would have laughed at it; now, she almost leapt at it. Here was a way of saving, not her self-respect, but what was of perhaps as much consequence—appearances.

By accepting Mr. Dulcimer, she could at least show Gertrude Ingleby that she had not deliberately set herself to entrap Lynn, rich, after jilting him, poor. Nothing short of this, she felt, could deliver her from the consequences of her fault at Leipsic—the only real fault, she believed, which she had committed, whatever her mistakes might have been. She knew very well what would be the general opinion of her father's conduct in the matter; and the cruel thing was, that she could not dissociate herself from her father. Lynn's money would not have been drawn into this speculation unless he had come to London; he would not have come to London unless she had first gone to Sprayton. Lynn might be brought to believe that, in going there, the desire to meet him again had been uppermost in her thoughts. That was only the truth; but assuredly, no one else would believe it.

All these things had passed through her mind, while Mr. Dulcimer was making her the offer of his hand, and while she gave him an answer that was not negative. She thought of them now, sitting crushed and still after that sudden, unexpected, interview with the lover she loved, yet had sent from her in anger and sorrow. Her reflections were very bitter. This second parting with Arthur Lynn was worse than the first had been. And it was, it must be, final; she told herself that, again and yet again. When he came to know the truth, he would pity her; that she believed. But pity after worship!—it was more than she could endure. Better say Yes to Mr. Dulcimer. She had sacrificed her happiness; at least she would save her pride. Mr. Dulcimer would have his answer—that night, if he came to seek it.

"Mrs. Chevenix bade me say to you, Miss, that Mr. Dulcimer is in the drawing-room. Dinner is served."

It was French who spoke. He had come along the terrace, unheard, to where she sat.

Camilla rose. She drew her hand across her brow, as if to efface the signs of agitation; then passed slowly into the house.

CHAPTER XXI.

DISCLOSURE.

Mr. Ingleby, having arrived in London, lost no time in setting about the business that had brought him there. Before ten o'clock, he was in the office of a certain firm of lawyers in Lincoln's Inn. The senior partner had not yet appeared; and Mr. Ingleby was kept waiting for nearly an hour, much to his displeasure. At last, however, he had his interview with the lawyer, and it proved to be a lengthy one. When it was over, he hastened to Southampton Row. "Not at home," was the answer he received, on asking for Mr. Lynn.

"I shall call again," said Mr. Ingleby, taken somewhat aback; "I shall call between four and five this afternoon. You may say to Mr.

Lynn that the business is most urgent. That, I should suppose, will be sufficient."

It was not sufficient, however, as Mr. Ingleby discovered when he came back at the appointed hour, to find that his nephew had again gone out without waiting for him, or leaving any message. The utter irregularity of this conduct seemed ominous of evil to Mr. Ingleby. He had had, that afternoon, a second interview by appointment with the lawyer; from whom he had learned certain facts that still further inflamed his wrath against Mr. Arden, and correspondingly increased his desire to see his nephew without delay. "Nevertheless, I shall wait," he said, when they told him that Mr. Lynn would almost certainly go to the office without returning to his rooms.

Mr. Ingleby did wait, for nearly two hours, most impatiently. Then he went out, and walked for some time up and down Southampton Row, and round Bloomsbury Square, vainly scanning the faces of the passers-by. At last, unable to bear the suspense any longer, he hailed a passing cab, and bade the man drive him to the office of the *Forum*. If need were, he would beard the man Mallory where he sat plying his profane pen, and drag that misguided youth from the monster's very jaws. This measure was not, however, necessary. Mr. Ingleby ascertained at the office—after threading the mazes of passage and staircase as though he expected momently to be Thugged—that his nephew had not yet come. So, more anxious now than ever, he made his way from the Strand back to Southampton Row.

There Lynn's landlady informed this persistent stranger that her lodger had not come in; but that, as one of the gentlemen belonging to his paper was waiting for him upstairs, he might perhaps do so before going to his office.

"I am Mr. Lynn's uncle," said Mr. Ingleby. "I have come up from Scotland to see him on business of importance, and I shall wait in his room until he return. At what hour, may I ask, does he usually come home from his—office?"

"Sometimes it's two in the morning," said the landlady, "sometimes it's nearer three. He lets himself in with his latch-key."

The idea of his nephew keeping such hours was repellent to Mr. Ingleby in the extreme.

"I shall wait for him," he said, "until he return, no matter how late that may be."—And Mr. Ingleby's way of saying this was such as to make the landlady at once conclude that her lodger must be running either into debt, or into matrimony with a barmaid.

Mr. Ingleby by no means relished the prospect of a *tête-à-tête* with one of Mr. Mallory's pupils in profanity. For he believed the *Forum* to be a daily bulletin from Tophet—a sheet foul with libels on all things held sacred by the good. He did not know that Mr. Mallory kept his irreligion carefully within cloth-bindings, and never allowed it to exude into his paper. Mr. Ingleby's face, therefore, wore its grimmest look as he was shown into Lynn's sitting-room, where Mr. Vaughan was awaiting the possible return of his fellow-journalist.

"Do all blackguards smoke cigars?"—pondered Mr. Ingleby, remembering how he had lately discovered Mr. Arden seated in the same easy attitude and swathed in the same odorous haze as the man now before him. Unlike Mr. Arden, however, Mr. Vaughan laid down his cigar, and apologised for the fragrant condition of the atmosphere.

"I did not expect," he said, "that Mr. Lynn would have a visitor at this hour."

"I am Arthur Lynn's uncle; I have arrived this day from Shawkirk"—said Mr. Ingleby. "I believe that you are employed at the same place with my nephew, and I should be obliged if you could tell me when he is likely to return—as it is of the gravest importance that I should see him at once."

"I am sorry I can't tell you that," said Mr. Vaughan. "I expected to see him at the office, but he was not there. I am going off duty myself for a day or two—a little holiday—and if Lynn does not come here soon, I shall leave a note for him, with what I wanted to say."

"I trust there may be nothing wrong," said Mr. Ingleby.

"Oh, there's no fear of that," said Vaughan, who was not, however, by any means so sure of this as he feigned to be. "Something has turned up, no doubt, to make him a little late for the office. Most likely he is there now. If so, you will have a goodish time to wait for him, you know."

Mr. Ingleby bowed.

"It has been a fine day," at length remarked Mr. Vaughan.

"It has rained almost incessantly since morning," said Mr. Ingleby.

"So it has," said Vaughan; "but it's a fine night now."

"I do not think so," said Mr. Ingleby—bent on making a stand for Truth, and selecting the safe ground of meteorology. "Pray do not interrupt your reading on my account"—he added, with a glance at the book which lay open before Vaughan on the table.

"Not at all," said Vaughan. "I was merely glancing over some books I had been speaking of to your nephew. They are"—he added, noticing the look of interest on Mr. Ingleby's face—"Borrow's *Bible in Spain*, and his *Wild Wales.*"

Mr. Ingleby was surprised, even mollified, by the titles of these works. One of them, he concluded, must be a record of missionary enterprise in a country which wanted badly to be evangelised; the other, most probably, depicted the agonies of the lost. The gloom on his face was therefore perceptibly lightened.

"I hope," he said, "that he is reading these works not as a mocker—not in a scoffing, but a serious spirit?"

"Oh, yes"—answered Vaughan—"yes, certainly. The fact is, he intends writing a magazine article on George Borrow and his works. 'Lavengro' will make a good subject. It was about that I wanted to see Lynn to-night—I may be able to do something for him with the publishers. You see, I don't think his present work on the *Forum* is altogether the thing for him—its influences require to be counteracted."

"Certainly"—assented Mr. Ingleby, who did not, of course, understand that Vaughan was speaking from the purely literary standpoint—"certainly. These influences *do* require to be counteracted, there can be no doubt of that. But I am, I confess, surprised to hear you, sir, make such an admission."

Mr. Vaughan stared. He felt himself getting out of his depth, and decided to change the subject.

"You are having an election in your town just now," he said.

"We are," said Mr. Ingleby.

"I see from the telegrams that Mr. Arden has had a most successful meeting. I suppose he is sure to go in?"

"That, sir," said Mr. Ingleby, "is not yet, I hope, a certainty."

Mr. Ingleby said this in such a tone as to give Mr. Vaughan the impression that he must have the misfortune to be either a shareholder in one of Mr. Arden's companies, or a specimen—the first he, Vaughan, had ever seen—of the Scottish Conservative.

"You are opposed to Arden?"—he said.

"I am. I feel that it is a Duty I owe to my fellow-townsmen—that it is a Public Duty to oppose, and to expose, such a man." Mr. Ingleby was inclined to insist on the public nature of this duty, being inwardly doubtful whether the sense of his private wrongs might not have carried him too far, in his championship of the incendiary Trotter.

"Mr. Arden," continued Mr. Ingleby, "has come before the constituency under false pretences. He has issued such an address as no honest man would have penned."

"Dear me!"—ejaculated Mr. Vaughan.

"That is so. From what I know of this man privately, I have no hesitation, sir, in saying that his return for any Scottish constituency would be a public misfortune, and a crying political wrong."

"There I quite agree with you," said Mr. Vaughan.

"May I ask, sir," said Mr. Ingleby, "if you happen to be acquainted with this—speculator?"

"Only slightly with him—but only too well with one of his speculations."

Mr. Ingleby began to soften still more towards his companion. A man who read books about missionaries in Spain, and who disliked Mr. Arden, could not be utterly depraved.

"I know of him," Vaughan went on, "in connection with a mine—the Lone Peak Silver Mine, Nevada—the kind of thing, you know, that brings ruin on the widow and the orphan."

"That, sir, is very true."

"Yes—unfortunately, it has brought ruin on people who belong to neither of these interesting classes."

"It has been an iniquitous swindle from first to last," said Mr. Ingleby. "Might I ask, sir, if your acquaintance with this man Arden extends to his family?—if you know anything about his—connections?"

"No," replied Mr. Vaughan. "I only know that, like Jephthah, Judge of Israel, he has one fair daughter, and no more."

'Sir!"—cried Mr. Ingleby, shocked beyond measure by the levity of the comparison—"I do not think that the names of Jephthah and his daughter need have been introduced in such a connection."

"I did not mention the daughter's name," said Mr. Vaughan; "in fact, I don't know what it was. However, if my remark offended you, I beg your pardon."

"That is needless," said Mr. Ingleby with solemnity; "do not beg pardon of *me*. But, talking of this man Arden—you have seen a good deal of my nephew, I presume, during the time he has been in London?"

"Oh, yes. We have been very good friends."

"Then, perhaps, you may know something of Arthur's intimacy with this Arden—whether he has frequented his house, and been much in his society?"

"No—I know nothing at all about it. I did not even know that your nephew was acquainted with Arden—he never said so. But I should think he can have had very little time to frequent anyone's house. A press-man's life, Mr.—ah, yes, Ingleby—is a hard one, you know."

"It is a life from which my nephew will be, I trust, soon—that is, immediately—freed."

"Indeed? You disapprove, then, of his choice of a profession?"

"I believe it is not in the ways of God," said Mr. Ingleby.

This was such a novel view of his calling that Mr. Vaughan felt for a moment perplexed.

"Yes, no doubt"—he said, after a pause; "that is, you dislike the tone of the *Forum?*"

"Since you have asked me, sir, I must say that I regard it as a newspaper which is doing an evil work in this land. It is trying to weaken men's belief in a Higher Power. It is teaching them to war against Capital."

"Serving neither God nor Mammon, you think?" said Mr. Vaughan.

"Well, yes," assented Mr. Ingleby a little doubtfully. "To me it has been a most sorrowful reflection that a nephew of mine, who was brought up in a truly Christian home—indeed, in my own—should now be engaged in writing revolutionary, and mayhap impious, matter for such an organ."

Mr. Vaughan was not in the least degree irritated by these pronounced opinions on his paper and his profession. He could not understand Mr. Ingleby; but he was interested in him as a type he had never met with before, in all his experience of humankind.

"I can assure you," he said, "that your nephew has done nothing of the kind, as yet. His work hitherto has been severely didactic—coldly matter-of-fact—absolutely untinged by political or other sentiment."

"I am deeply relieved to hear that such is the case," said Mr. Ingleby. "I am rejoiced to learn that my nephew has had the strength of mind to resist the influence of the man Mallory—that he has left to others—but I beg your pardon, sir. I forgot that your own work may possibly differ from Arthur's."

"It does," said Mr. Vaughan, bent on soothing his interlocutor in the interests of psychological research; "but I'm not at all proud of my work, I assure you. Even a journalist, you know, may keep a conscience; and I really feel ashamed at times, when I'm asked to reconcile the Premier with himself."

Mr. Ingleby's face became very grave. "Am I to infer from that remark," he asked, "that you, sir, disapprove of Mr. Gladstone as a Statesman?"

"I am not a keen politician," said Mr. Vaughan—and this was undoubtedly true. Mr. Vaughan regarded beliefs and opinions of all kinds from the purely artistic point of view. He looked on them as a sculptor might look on his lump of clay. They existed to supply material for his creative genius—in other words, as subjects for leading articles. Beyond that he did not seek to carry his analysis.—"I am not a keen politician, but of course I can see what Gladstone is doing."

"And what, in your opinion, is he doing?"

"Bringing in Socialism under a mist, you know"—and Mr. Vaughan looked to Mr. Ingleby for approval.

"Sir!"—said Mr. Ingleby—"I have been young, and now am old, but nothing that I have heard, in the course of a long life-time, has given me such a shock of surprise as what you have just said!"

"Then you are not Conservative in your politics?"—said Mr. Vaughan. "I thought, you know, from your remarks on the *Forum*, that you might be."

"Conservative!"—exclaimed Mr. Ingleby, rising in his wrath—"no, sir; and I am at a loss to know what can have given birth to such a hallucination in your mind. I should have thought—"

Here Mr. Ingleby stopped abruptly. Lynn's voice was heard in the lobby below, and then his foot on the stair. The look on Mr. Ingleby's face changed at once. It ceased to be controversial, and became anxious instead. Mr. Vaughan noticed his perturbation; and from that, coupled with the fact that Lynn was not at the office, drew the conclusion that there must be something amiss.

"Here he is at last"—he said—"and as your business with him is probably more important than mine, I think I shall say Good night."

"Good night, my dear sir," said Mr. Ingleby, who had now apparently forgotten all about politics—"Good night. I have been much interested in your conversation. I trust we may meet at some future time. For the present, you will understand—"

"Oh, perfectly"—said Vaughan. Half-puzzled, half-amused, he shook hands with Mr. Ingleby and departed, exchanging a few hurried words with Lynn on the stair.

"Arthur!"—exclaimed Mr. Ingleby, as his nephew entered the room—"my dear Arthur! So you have come at last!"

Then uncle and nephew stood for some moments without speaking; and looked at each other with a certain degree of curiosity. Lynn was surprised to find his uncle there at all, and still more surprised by his affectionate greeting. He was not accustomed to hear himself styled "my dear Arthur" by Mr. Ingleby; and he missed the look of stern reprobation which Mr. Ingleby's face ought certainly, under the circumstances, to have worn. Mr. Ingleby, for his part, was struck by the change that had come over his nephew since last he had seen him. Lynn looked pale and care-worn. He had lost that gay indifferentism of voice and manner which had caused so much anxiety to his guardian in former days. He seemed, somehow, to have become older by years, within the last few months. Mr. Ingleby put this down to 'life in London.' That was, he knew, a trying and perilous ordeal for even the staidest and best-principled of young men. But what must it have been in the case of one so easy-going as his nephew—of one who had entered on it under the auspices of Mr. Arden and Mr. Mallory! "He is certainly changed"—said Mr. Ingleby to himself; and his conscience smote him. But for his well-meant interference, Arthur Lynn need never have been exposed to the temptations of the Evil City. This reflection did not make the task that now lay before Mr. Ingleby seem any the more easy. Neither did the quiet gravity of Lynn's bearing. The truth was, that Lynn now felt himself in the position of one to whom Fate has done its worst, and who can afford to be indifferent with regard to minor troubles. Mr. Ingleby, of course, did not know this. His nephew's manner of receiving him, he thought, seemed to say that the days of pupilage were over.

"Sit down, uncle"—said Lynn. "I am glad to see you."

"And I am glad to see *you*, Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby; "very glad. I have been in great anxiety on your account."

"About that letter I wrote you?—well, I was uneasy myself, at the time. But I hope that has not been the only thing that brought you up to town? You might have written anything there was to say. That would have done just as well, you know."

"Arthur"—said Mr. Ingleby, in a tone of such solemnity that Lynn was almost startled by it—"it was, in a sense, your letter that brought me here. But I have things to say to you that could not have been said in writing. The time has come, I feel, when I cannot longer remain silent, without incurring such a load of responsibility as I am unwilling to bear. You must prepare yourself, Arthur, to learn what will certainly amaze—it may be, overwhelm you for the moment. You must bring yourself to contemplate a complete and sudden change in your position and views of life."

"Oh, I know it's not so bad as that!" said Lynn, to whom it seemed as if Mr. Ingleby's words were meant to foreshadow a felon's cell —"I have been foolish, no doubt; but there was nothing dishonest on my part, much less criminal. You are taking a most exaggerated view of the matter, uncle."

"I am not now referring to the subject of your letter, Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, with increased solemnity. "That is certainly a serious thing, which I must discuss with you later; but at present it is subsidiary. The—communication I have to make to you is one of the utmost moment—"

"Won't it keep?"—asked Lynn.

"Keep!"—exclaimed Mr. Ingleby, reverting for an instant to his more familiar manner—"for what reason do you ask such a thing?"

"Well, the fact is I am rather out of sorts to-night—I don't feel equal to a long talk. If you have something disagreeable to say to me, uncle, I wish you'd let it stand over till to-morrow morning. I really wish you would."

"What I have to say to you, Arthur," replied Mr. Ingleby, "cannot stand over—neither, I should think, will you find it disagreeable. When I tell you that on your account I have absented myself from business at a most inconvenient time of the year—that I have left home in the midst of such a critical election as the one now going on—that I have travelled four hundred miles, and hunted all over London to find you—you will perhaps realise in some measure how grave the circumstances are. You will not ask me to let anything 'stand over.'"

"You have always been a good friend to me," said Lynn; "I know that, though we have not always agreed."

"I have always sought to do my Duty by you, Arthur—humbly and prayerfully, according to my lights. As regards your coming here, and joining yourself with the band of men who write for that godless newspaper, I have never concealed my opinion. I could not have grieved over that more deeply, had you been my own son."

"Don't let us talk about that now, uncle," said Lynn, wearily. "It can do no good. This much I will say to you—it would have been better, ten thousand times better for me if I had never come here at all. And as for the *Forum*, I am not likely to be on it much longer, I imagine."

"What do you mean by *that?*"—asked Mr. Ingleby very sharply. "Has any one been—"

"I only mean that I don't like the work, and that the work doesn't like me. For the latter reason, I shall probably soon be freed from it. The other objection I might have got over, on account of the bread and butter, you know."

"I am relieved—nay, rejoiced to hear you speak thus," said Mr. Ingleby. "I had not, Arthur, I confess it—I had not expected to find you in such a frame of mind. I had feared the worst, from your associations of the last few months—from your intimacy with the man Mallory, and with—with others. I am inexpressibly thankful to Providence that you have been brought as gold through the furnace, and that you have come at last to see with me eye to eye. It lightens the task that lies before me."

"What task?"—inquired Lynn, whose curiosity, dulled at first by the sense of his own troubles, was now being awakened more and more. He could not think what to make of Mr. Ingleby, he was so strangely subdued and unlike himself. Never before had Lynn found his uncle so mildly despotic, so gently arrogant, so affectionately overbearing. He began to reflect that there must be a reason for the change. Further, that his uncle would scarcely have come all the way to London with a single eye to sermonising.—"What task?" he said. "I cannot in the least think what you mean."

"I shall tell you," said Mr. Ingleby, drawing his chair nearer to the table that stood in the centre of the room, and looking across at Lynn, who sat opposite. The situation reminded Lynn of one of those 'conferences' he had been used to have with his uncle, and of which he did not cherish an agreeable recollection. But now there was a difference. He felt, though he could not define it.

"Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, after a somewhat prolonged pause, "do you remember having heard, at any time, the name of Gilbert Hume?"

"Not to my knowledge."

"That does not surprise me, seeing he left Shawkirk while you were a mere child—before your father's—misfortune."

"Who was this Hume you speak of, and what has he to do with me?"

"He was," said Mr. Ingleby, "when I knew him, a young man, a traveller in your father's employment. What he has to do with you, this letter will show. I do not, of course, know its contents, but I can partly guess them. I should tell you that the man who wrote this letter is no more. He died in March of this year—before you had returned from Germany. Read it, my dear Arthur—then I shall know what there is left for me to explain."

This was the letter which Lynn received in wonderment from Mr. Ingleby's hand, and read in wonderment still greater :—

" My Dear Arthur Lynn,—If this letter " should ever come into your hands, it will " mean that I who write it am no longer in " the land of the living. I have looked for- " ward for long to meeting you, and speaking " with you face to face, and saying many " things to you which I cannot put down in " writing. But I am warned not to cherish " this hope. The doctors here profess them- " selves astonished that I have reached this " country alive; and if what they say is true, " there are but a few weeks left to me in this " world. I have therefore placed this letter " in your uncle's hands, to be given you on " your twenty-fifth birthday, or at such time " before that as he may think advisable. Its

" contents will no doubt take you by surprise. " My name is probably unknown to you ; but " yours is, and always has been, very dear to " me. Your father did to me as great a ser- " vice as one man could render to another. If " you wish to know more particularly the " nature of that service, your uncle Mr. " Ingleby will be able to tell you ; but it is " enough to say that I was worse than foolish, " and he was better than merciful. Twenty " years and more have come and gone since " then, but I have never forgotten it. I have " prospered greatly in that new country where " your father's generosity enabled me to make " a fresh start in life. My wealth shall be " yours after I am gone. I have neither kith nor " kin in the wide world; and there is none so " near my heart as my old master's only son. " When the news of your father's misfortunes " and of his death came to me, I had a pleasure " in saying to myself, Now I shall be able to " repay my debt in part—for it is, I feel, only " a partial repayment. I will not think that " you have ever reproached your father, even “in your thoughts, because his great love for “his fellow-men, and his devotedness to what “he thought just and right, have left you poor “in respect of this world's goods. But if ever “such a thought has crossed your mind, you “will know now that one at least of your “father's deeds of kindness has not been forgotten, and that it has made you rich. I “will not say more. There is, I fear, but “little chance of my meeting you on this side “of the grave. I have held you in my arms “in your childhood; and one reason of your “father's great goodness to me was, as he told “me, the affection which I had shown for “you, and which you, in your baby way, had “seemed to return. And now I write the “Good-bye which, in all probability, I shall “not be spared to say to you. I do not say, “Follow your father's example in all things; “for this world is not for such as him. But I “do say, Copy his transparent truthfulness, “his belief in the better side of human nature, “and his constant gentleness in word and “deed. I have known both poverty and

" riches ; and I know that it is better to be " rich than to be poor. My money has been " honestly made, that I can say without fear, " looking back over my past from the threshold of the grave ; by hard work and self-" denial. You need not scruple to take it, " since no one has so good a right to it as you. " But do not let it make you selfish, careless " of others, satisfied only to be rich ; else you " will turn into evil the good which your " father has done. I do not fear for you ; I " need not have written thus ; but since it is " written, let it stand. You will know that I " wish you well. The thought that my wealth " will make you happy, that it will place you " above those temptations to which, as I know " by dear-bought experience, a man who is " young, and poor, may be exposed—will be a " consolation to me at my closing hour. I " sign myself, in all the meaning of the words,
" Yours affectionately, GILBERT HUME."

There was also a postscript to the letter. " Briggs and Barnard, Lincoln's Inn, have the "duplicate of my will; and Mr. John Ayres, "late of Brisbane, now of Wealdham, Kent, one "of the trustees, will give you all information "as to the estate. The other trustees are "Mr. Malcolm of Coorabinda, Queensland, my "partner in the sheep-runs; and your uncle, "Mr. Ingleby. All arrangements have been "made with a view to the probability that "I shall not be alive, when you return from "Germany. In that case, you are to be informed by your uncle, Mr. Ingleby, and by "him alone, as to the contents of my will. "The time when this disclosure shall be made "is left, in terms of my will, to his discretion; "with the proviso that you shall not pass your "twenty-fifth year without being told. You "have a right to know the reasons that have "led me to take this course. I am acting "on the advice of Mr. Ingleby, and can only "hope that his advice is good. My sole "anxiety has been to secure your well-being "in the world, so far as wealth can do that; "and though I do not agree with all that Mr. "Ingleby has to say on the subject of poverty

“ as a moral discipline, I have not thought
“ it fitting to ignore his counsel. He was
“ the guardian chosen by your father ; he has
“ known you all your life ; and after the strong
“ opinion he expressed to me, and the statements he made when I saw him at Shawkirk, I have determined, though not without
“ hesitation, to leave this matter in his hands.
“ What those statements were, you will be able
“ to learn from himself. I can only trust that
“ all has been for the best. I have greatly
“ wished to see you, to press your hand, to
“ talk to you of your father, and all he did
“ for me. But that, I fear, is not to be. As
“ with my latest breath, I say May God bless
“ you and keep you, my dear Arthur Lynn !

G. H.”

When Lynn had finished reading this letter, there were tears in his eyes. He had not yet realised the fact that a great fortune had been left him. But he did realise the pathos of those lines, written by a hand now still for ever. This man, at any rate, had appreciated and honoured his father, whom he had been used to hear spoken of by others with, at best, a kind of pitying condescension. This man, of whom he knew nothing beside, had loved him for his father's sake—from no selfish motives, had sought his welfare. To Arthur Lynn, in his present mood, Hume's letter was as a spring of water in a thirsty land.

"And he is dead!"—These were the first words he spoke, and they astonished Mr. Ingleby, who had been watching his nephew intently while he read the letter. Mr. Ingleby had not expected that Lynn would take the revelation so quietly; nor that he would waste much time in mourning the loss of one who was to him, after all, a stranger even by name.

"Yes," he said; "certainly, he is dead. There is no doubt about that. He died, as I already mentioned to you, more than six months ago, while you were still abroad."

"And you never told me!"—exclaimed Lynn, looking towards his uncle with an expression of mingled wonder and reproach.

"May I ask you, Arthur, what he says in that letter?"—Mr. Ingleby looked as if he expected Lynn to hand him the letter for perusal. But Lynn did not do so. He set himself to read the letter again, and left his uncle's question unanswered.

Then the truth burst upon him in all its fulness. He was rich!—an hour ago he had been almost penniless; now, he found himself the heir to a great fortune. So the letter said, and he did not doubt it. But if a shadow of uncertainty had crossed his mind, there was his uncle, sitting opposite him at the table; and Mr. Ingleby's very presence in those London lodgings was sufficient confirmation, had such been needed, of the tale.

A few weeks, even a few days before, the tidings of such a change in his lot would probably have thrown Lynn into a state of violent excitement. So long as the money left him by his father had lasted, even his uncle's repeated warnings had failed to keep him constantly in mind of the fact that he was poor. Without being actually extravagant, he had by no means been given to thrift; and he had been accustomed, much to Mr. Ingleby's sorrow, to make a jest of the name of Mr. Samuel Smiles. But since his return from the Continent, and especially since the beginning of his career in London, Lynn had been forced to realise the inconveniences of poverty. As Mr. Macritchie's tutor, as Mr. Mallory's sub-editor,—and, above all, as Camilla Arden's lover, his want of means had been brought home to him in many painful ways. And so, had his uncle come to him a fortnight sooner, and said to him, "Arthur, you are no longer poor"—he would have worn in Lynn's eyes the aspect of an angel of light. But Mr. Ingleby had come with his tidings a little too late for that. There was nothing of that rapturous delight, that wild exaltation of spirits about Lynn, for which Mr. Ingleby had been prepared. He was, in truth, completely puzzled by his nephew's manner of receiving the news. There was no opening, so far as he could see, for that *rôle* of the judicious adviser, the benevolent mentor, toning down the first transports of joy of the suddenly-enriched young man—to which Mr. Ingleby had looked forward as his own. He could not tell from Lynn's face whether he were glad or sorry. But he saw that his nephew was thinking the matter out; and waited till the first word came from him.

"Did you know this man, uncle?"—asked Lynn at length.

"I had not seen him for twenty years and more, until he came to me at Shawkirk, last January."

"And what was this service that my father did him?—but no, I will not ask you that! Don't answer me!"—he added hastily, noticing the peculiar look that crossed his uncle's face, and instantly connecting it with Hume's allusion to his own "dear-bought experience" of the temptations which assail young men who are poor.

"You are right, Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby with gravity, "quite right in not asking me that. Be it sufficient for you that this man—whose whole conduct in the matter has been, as I consider it, deserving of all praise—has left you absolute master of great wealth—for it is great. Remember that yesterday you were poor, and that to-day you are rich. Think on the responsibilities involved in such a change. Bear in mind, my dear Arthur, that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things that he possesses; and that—"

"Uncle," said Lynn abruptly, "you say that yesterday I was poor. Now, that is a point I should like you to explain to me. So far as I can make out from this letter, Mr. Hume's fortune passed to me at his death?"

"Certainly."

"And is mine at this moment?"

"Certainly. There can be no doubt as to that."

"It was therefore mine in March of this year, when Mr. Hume's death took place?"

"In a sense, my dear Arthur—in a sense it was. In a sense it became yours whenever the will was proved. The other gentlemen whom Mr. Hume appointed as trustees understand the position clearly. From the day when the contents of Mr. Hume's will are divulged to you, the property becomes absolutely your own."

"That is the point, uncle. Why was not all this made known to me six months ago, instead of being kept back until now?"

"Does this letter not explain all that? I should have supposed—"

Mr. Ingleby had stretched his hand across the table, as if to take the letter. But Lynn himself took it, and glanced at it again.

"This letter," he said, looking Mr. Ingleby full in the face, "speaks of certain statements made by you, uncle, to Mr. Hume. What were they?—I am to ask that question, it says here, of yourself."

"I shall tell you, Arthur, since you desire to know. I do not need to defend myself in this matter—though your tone in addressing me would almost make it seem as if you thought so."

"No, no. Do not misunderstand me. I say again, uncle, what I said before—that you have always been a friend to me—in your intentions. I know it."

"I thank you, Arthur, for saying that. It is indeed no more than the truth. When Mr. Hume came to me, it was to seek my counsel and co-operation in carrying out his purpose with regard to you. His first intention had been to make over to you a large part of his fortune at once. I advised him against that, strongly."

"On what grounds?"

"On these—" answered Mr. Ingleby; and then set forth at considerable length his favourite theories on the poor man's lot as the school of earnestness, industry, and self-reliance; and on wealth, unearned by labour, as a foe to all those things. Lynn heard him out with seeming patience.

"But that was not all you told him, uncle," he said, as Mr. Ingleby came to a pause. "I assume you gave him your opinions about me?—about my character, and conduct?"

"I did," said Mr. Ingleby. "I spoke the truth in love, Arthur; as I have always spoken to yourself, so I spoke to him."

"Then I need not be surprised at what has been done!"

"You might have spared me that taunt, I think," said Mr. Ingleby. "You must not forget that I had good reason, at the time, for speaking as I did to Mr. Hume."

"How?"

"I refer to your manner of life in that foreign city. It is not my wish to go back on the past, in search of grounds whereon to accuse you. But you must yourself be aware of the painful anxiety, the deep distress of mind, which your conduct occasioned me at that time. The day of your examination passed, and you had not returned. Your letters became infrequent, and most—unsatisfactory. Indeed, there was a request for money in every one of them. You were spending three or four times as much as you did during the first months of your sojourn abroad. I was driven to conclude that you had relinquished all thought of serious effort, and abandoned yourself to a life of pleasure. Indeed, I learned that such was unhappily the case, from a source which I had no reason to question."

"And it was on the strength of those miserable stories that you stood between me and the man who wished me well? You do not know, uncle, what you have done!"

"What I have done? Yes, I know it. I have prevented you, Arthur—you force me to say it—from stepping at once into a position for which I considered you totally unfit. I have been obliged by—by circumstances to modify my plans. But I cannot see what injury can have been done you, by six months' delay in acquainting you with your good fortune."

"No—you cannot see it; I know that! But you have done me an injury, uncle—a frightful injury. It is not your sending me to Shawkirk as—a tutor, nor your letting me come up here to find a living as I might—it is not those things that I complain of. Even your having kept me from seeing this man's face, and thanking him with my own lips—even that I might have forgiven. But this other and worse thing—no, it is too late! That cannot be undone!"

"Arthur," began Mr. Ingleby, "I do not, I confess, understand you. When you speak to me of forgiveness, I can only infer"—but here Mr. Ingleby, observing the look of almost agony on his nephew's face, dropped the tone of lofty self-assertion, and said, quite mildly:—"What is it, Arthur? Tell me what is wrong!"

"There is no good in my telling you," said Lynn. "It is my concern, and mine alone. The wrong has been done, and can never be made right again—never!"

"Not at all!"—said Mr. Ingleby briskly. "You are taking much too dark a view of the affair, my dear Arthur, I assure you. I stated the case to-day to Mr. Barnard, and he agrees with me in thinking that you will not lose a penny. The transaction would not stand the light of day for a moment—a court of law would make short work of *that*, if it ever went so far, which it will not."

"What are you talking of, uncle, in Heaven's name?"

"Of those shares, of course, which that—that—"

Then Lynn broke into a laugh, which was not exactly pleasant for Mr. Ingleby to hear.

"And so you actually think that those paltry shares—"

"Paltry shares!"—cried Mr. Ingleby—"paltry shares?—Why, do you know what they amount to?"

"I was not thinking of them," said Lynn. "I am past caring for such things."

"Then what is it that is troubling you, Arthur? Perhaps I might be able to advise you—to—"

"No, you cannot advise me, or help me in any way. It has been a fatal mistake. You have gone far to ruining my life for me—and all because you have wished to keep me in leading-strings—because you have treated me as if I were a child, and not a man."

"Gertrude's very words!"—said Mr. Ingleby, speaking in his bewilderment rather to himself than to his nephew.

"So Gertrude knew of it!"—cried Lynn. "I see you have all been in the plot against me! I have been deceived by those I trusted. But I have learned a lesson. I shall never trust again!"

Lynn spoke in great excitement, and emphasised the word 'never' by striking his hand upon the table. Mr. Ingleby was amazed, almost frightened, by his nephew's manner. He had thought it possible that Lynn might resent the action he had taken. But surely his nephew would give him credit for the excellence of his intentions; and in any case, the flood of joy called forth by the revelation he had to make would be certain to sweep away any unpleasantness. But things had not turned out as he had expected. Arthur had been much too quiet at first, and was much too angry and agitated now. Mr. Ingleby could think of no reason for any such display of emotion.

"Arthur," he said, "you are saying these things in your haste, and you will regret them. There has been no plot against you—or rather, there *has* been a plot, but none in which your cousin and myself have had part or share. She knew nothing of this until a few weeks ago—and, indeed, her opinion was that you should be told without delay. In that I thought, and still think, that she was wrong. For myself, I have simply used the discretion given me by Mr. Hume. I, at least, have held fast mine integrity; I can look you or any man in the face, and say that I have done honestly what I have done. I may have erred—for we see but a step in front of us, and are compassed about with infirmities. But I do not think I have. Indeed, I may say to you—at the risk of giving you offence—that I would not be here this night, to tell you what I have told, unless I had been forced to do so by the craft and guile of others—whom there is no need that I should name to you."

"What am I to understand by that?

Remember, I must have the whole truth now."

"When I saw that man Arden in Shawkirk, Arthur, he told me that—that you were to marry his daughter?"

"It is not the case," said Lynn.

"I am delighted to hear it!"—cried Mr. Ingleby joyfully. "My dear Arthur, you have taken a load of care from off my mind! Now I may speak to you freely—now I may say to you what I think. Since I saw through the designs of that young lady and her father—"

"Leave *her* name out of the conversation, uncle," said Lynn sternly. "I shall not allow you to speak freely, as you call it, about *her*."

Mr. Ingleby looked at his nephew in blank amazement. He was not accustomed to be spoken to in such a tone. Cut short thus abruptly in his diatribe, he knew not what to say.

"You spoke of seeing through 'designs,'" continued Lynn—"designs of Mr. Arden's. What were they?—What is it you mean?"

"Is it possible, Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, after a pause, "that you can be still blind to the true character and purposes of that man? Do you not see now what end he has had in view, in—in connecting himself with you and your affairs? He has known all along of the fortune left you by Mr. Hume—"

"What?"

"He has known it, I say all along. He is a man of brazen effrontery, and seems actually to glory in what he has done. When he sought you out at Shawkirk—when he tempted you hither and found employment for you on the paper of the man Mallory—when he lied you into taking shares in that accursed mine—an act of flagrant dishonesty for which he shall yet pay dear!—when he did all those things, it was your money he wanted—that, and only that! And his daughter—I shall say it, for it is the truth—his daughter has been his confederate in this precious scheme!"

"It is false!" cried Lynn, starting from his chair in violent agitation. "It is false as hell! I will not believe it—I will not hear of such a thing!"

"It is true," said Mr. Ingleby, also rising from his seat—"It is true, and you know it. For what else, do you think, did she come down to Sprayton, but for the purpose of meeting you there? And for what purpose should she have sought to meet you, unless—"

"Stop!"—said Lynn. "You have said enough. You may stop now."

Words, looks, trivial incidents of the past crowded upon his memory, and in the light of this revelation took a new and sinister meaning. He seemed to hear her say:—"Arthur, I have deceived you!"—Yes; he had been deceived.

"It is true!"—he said at last—"God pity me, it is true!"

Then, turning his back on Mr. Ingleby, he leant his arms on the mantel, and buried his face in his hands.

Mr. Ingleby knew not what to do or say. He felt sorry for his nephew, though only imperfectly divining the extent of his trouble. He would have liked to administer consolation; but could not imagine what form it ought to take. He felt his position somewhat embarrassing, as the minutes passed, and still Lynn neither moved nor spoke.

At last he drew near, and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder. Still Lynn made no sign.

"Arthur," said Mr. Ingleby, "I think I shall leave you now. I have yet many things to say to you, and to-morrow I shall come again. But for the present I shall go. I do not wonder that all this should be to you as a dream when one awaketh. After a little calm reflection, your way will seem more clear. Good night, my dear Arthur—Good night!"

But still Lynn said nothing; and Mr. Ingleby—walking as quietly as though he had been leaving a sick-room—took himself away.

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